Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Religion and Politics
Girard and Violence
Education and Ecology
Inculturation in Mission
Authentic Peace
Blessings

Volume 58, No. 1 **January 1994**

CONTENTS

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

Published by S Arokiasamy on behalf of the Vidyajyoti Educational and Welfare Society (Views) 4A Raj Niwas Marg Delhi 110054, and printed by him at Printsman 18A II Doriwalan New Rothak Road New Delhi 110005

Manuscripts for publication typed in double spacing, books for review and exchange copies of periodicals should be addressed to **The Editor, Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection 4A Raj Niwas Marg, Delhi 110054, India** Only manuscripts not published elsewhere will be considered

All business communications (subscriptions change of address back numbers, advertisements) must be addressed to **The Manager, Vidyajyoti Journal, 4A Raj Niwas Marg, Delhi 110054** Requests for renewals discontinuance and change of address should reach the Manager at least four weeks before they are to go into effect When notifying a change of address both the old and the new address should be given in full and also the subscription number which appears on the wrapper before the address **Subscriptions** may date from any number and are payable in advance The Volumes begin with the January issue and end with the Index in the December issue of each year

Subscription Rates for 1994

India Nepal Bhutan	**Rs 50 00**	**Sri Lanka**	**Rs 100 00***
Seminarians	**Rs 40 00**	**Pakistan**	**US $ 12.00**
Bangladesh	**Rs 70 00***	**Other countries**	**US $ 18.00**
*Indian Currency		**Air Mail Surcharge**	**US $ 10.00**

Please send Subscription from India by Money Order or Demand Draft (if paid by Personal Cheques add Rs 10) from the Commonwealth by British Postal Order or Cheque and from other countries by International Money Order or Cheque, all payments to be made in the name of **VIDYAJYOTI JOURNAL**

Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection

Volume LVIII
January to December 1994

Edited from
VIDYAJYOTI-DELHI
College of Theology
Published by the
VIDYAJYOTI EDUCATIONAL AND WELFARE SOCIETY
Printed at
Printsman, New Delhi
India

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Vol. LVIII JANUARY 1994 No. 1

Editorial

Religion and Politics

Framed by the Ayodhya events of December 1992 and the North Indian elections of late 1993, last year kept before our eyes the problem of how to relate, or separate, religion and politics in our country This is not a new problem nor only an Indian problem It is well known that powerful and influential religious groups here and elsewhere refuse to accept the separation of these two fields of human concern, at least as it is propounded in our political textbooks or formulated in our legal documents

The reaction to the controversial 80th Amendment Bill of 1993, proposed to solve our problems in this area, indicates that the matter cannot be solved at the legal level The bill itself recognises that there are safeguards in the Constitution to solve the problem — safeguards that are just not implemented. The bill could obviously give excessive control to the government in power over the freedoms of the citizens. any protest movement that made an issue not only of religion, but also of "race, . residence, language, caste or community," could conceivably be seen as infringing this legislation and thus be banned or penalised for "promoting disharmony " Such legislation would be a powerful weapon in the hands of those who want to uphold the status quo.

What is really at stake in the present controversy goes beyond the legal realm The very concept of the secular as explicitly introduced into the Preamble of the Constitution by the 42nd Amendment of 1976 is rejected.

Secularism is an ambiguous term and a relatively modern political concept. Most ancient civilizations were theocratic in character without any clear concept of the secular. They were also frequently tyrannical and oppressive. The consciousness of our rights to a dignified survival, the sense of equality, and the demand of freedom have errupted in our planet with great power after the revolutions of 1789 and 1917. Catholics whose Church has often insisted on the all-encompassing nature of their religious faith and resisted the emergence of the secular, could be particularly sympathetic to those who are allergic to secularism and feel that the national life of India should be governed by its own traditional religion.

Nationalism is a virtue. It can also be a vice. What is not acceptable is to ignore the evolution of human consciousness and throw the country back to the middle ages, as if we had not grown in the past two centuries. It is no doubt true that our commitments to absolute and ultimate values, often incarnated as religious faith, need to influence our whole lives. We are not and should not be split personalities. All our decisions must be in consonance with our commitments to Truth and Goodness, which for many of us mean God. We can also affirm that our religious options need to find expression in public life. Prayer has a political dimension. But in the measure this public aspect is organised, religion becomes a centre of power, and power corrupts even the spiritual sphere.

As a centre of power, religion can be very oppressive. All civilizations have experienced this phenomenon to some degree or other, for example in the form of theocratic institutions, or of social controls that bind the individual to a specific place in the hierarchical structure. Religion always needs to be challenged and purified.

What force or power will challenge religion? The challenge comes from the authentic humanist consciousness, the awareness of the dignity and significance of every person in the society where she or he lives -- the innate dignity and right to freedom of even the poorest person in our neighbourhood. Religion may or may not affirm such dignity; in practice it has often ignored it. Modern political life is built around this affirmation.

When this humanist faith is lived in situations of the new pluralism of our times it necessarily develops the sphere of the *secular*. In our Indian past we certainly had pluralism, but it was a fragmented pluralism wherein each caste, group or race was assigned fixed geographical, cultural or social boundaries which they

could not trespass Today's pluralism has a different quality. The growing quest for freedom has broken the ancient taboos and enlarged enormously the presence and the scope of action of each individual and group in the total social fabric. Pluralism today means the interaction between groups and a democratic consciousness.

Pluralism includes religious pluralism. Almost all nations today live the experience of this pluralism. It forces us to build the structure of human values not as deriving from religious dogma but as the agreed assessment of the human reality in its most basic and inviolable values· the dignity, freedom and equality of all persons and of all races and groups Today these are accepted values. The UN charter and its organisms, our Constitution, politics, the various movements for human rights, are all based on a growing agreement on them The fundamental insights of this humanism are today universally accepted even when they are violated. And as our pluralistic culture grows, so does the area of this agreed consciousness of the *human* today we speak not only of women's rights, but also of children's rights and even, for some, of 'biotic' rights

Religion has much to say about human dignity and rights Though today's humanism is based on the *experience* of the human, and not primarily derived from Scriptures or dogmas, still we can recognise in it profound religious insights the face of God is discovered in God's own image, the person, the depth of the Atman is the Brahman. Because humanism derives its sustenance primarily from the secular experiences, it can challenge and correct the oppressive tendencies of religion when it becomes a power structure In India it challenges a deeply rooted hierarchical culture. Conversely, humanism itself can become an oppressive ideology, as is apparent in many forms of capitalism and even socialism Religion protects the transcendent dimensions of the human and ensures that the autonomy of humanism does not spawn an ethical irresponsibility, as has often been the case in the past

To be true to its role, humanism must assume the perspective of those who are marginalised in society Only the poor can tell us what the true face of humanism is The elitism of bourgeois society or even that inscribed deep in capitalistic democracies cannot lead us to an authentic humanism. It has led to untold miseries

The insights of humanism are today articulated in terms of human rights. This concept needs to be complemented with that of *dharma*, the sacred order, the duty: the human being lives with her

or his dignity and rights only in relation to the social order. But it must not forget that dharma, no less than religion, tends to be static and turn oppressive, resistant to pluralism. Dharma needs to be constantly updated so as to be always at the service of the human The Sabbath is for man Human rights, therefore, must not be understood in individualistic terms The primary stress is on the rights of peoples and groups in their communitarian and societal dimensions. The "Year of the Indigenous Peoples" has reminded us of this

Coming back to the Indian reality, it would seem that although we have a tradition of peaceful coexistence, a kind of "pluralism", yet often our religious identity is too strong and one-sided, feeding on the memory of the past, dependent on emotion rather than rationality, and expressing itself in a frantic search for security and survival Too often we feel threatened by the "other " This brings about irrational outbursts of violence, inspired by communal loyalities which are manipulated by politicians and economic interest groups One seeks in vain for enlightened debate not on past wounds but on present social and economic problems and on the way to resolve our inequalities

We need to enlarge rather than restrict the area of *the human* wherein both the religion of power and power politics are critiqued and contained We need to become aware of our multiple identity and not consider only our religious identity, even if this has its legitimate place in life We need to guide the struggle for survival by a new consciousness where our false perceptions are dissolved We must make our politics more truly democratic and participatory, our religion more mystical and tolerant of pluralism, our society more secular and rational

Strange as it may seem, religious people are today called to defend the secular, the human The authentic spirit of religion, as found in the mystics and the prophets, will affirm that these values derive ultimately from the Absolute Truth, not from political convention or power balance In the end this will strengthen the forces of secularism The mystical depths of religion will save us form that cynicism which, when it spreads to the young, kills all hope in society The prophetic dimension will question the power of the institution, both in politics and in religion itself And we all need the power of love to enable us to embrace the other because in the other we discover the Other, the Divine, who is, paradoxically, the deepest truth of the Self

VJTR 58 (1994) 7-14

Cultures, Communities, Christ

Bishop Thomas MENAMPARAMPIL

The Bishop of Guwahati (Bishop's House P O Box 253, Guwahati 781001, Assam) takes up the theme of inculturation and places it back in its missionary context He stresses that people matter, and that inculturation takes place at the encounter point between Christ, the people their communities, and the evangelizer whose primary concern must be to ensure that that the encounter of the former takes place and to trust in the creative power of the Gospel and of the people's culture

When one hears of culture, one is inclined to think of those aspects of human life that have to do with 'fine arts' like music, dance and theatre, or those areas of intellectual pursuits like philosophy, science and religious enquiry This is an elitist view of culture and is in keeping with the classical tradition

Definition

What in reality is culture? How is it defined? In 1952 A L Kroeber and C Kluckhohn presented about 300 definitions of culture and analysed 164 of them Culture is a complex of factors that make a person what he/she is as an individual and as a member of a community It is acquired after birth and through it one inserts oneself into the human universe We are programmed, educated and indoctrinated into one way, and only one way, of being a human person, American or Assamese, Eskimo or Portuguese

One's culture, therefore, conditions one's language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies and other related elements

There is no a-cultural person on this planet. Even those who are often described as "uncultured" have a culture of their own, and it is not easy to define whose culture is superior. The so-called "primitive" cultures at times have evolved laws that are more humane and relationships that are more in keeping with human [illegible]

Every culture is unique, and has to be evaluated on its own inner merits and according to the nature of its own original genius The question to be asked is not how like or unlike is this culture in comparison with our own (early anthropologists delighted in describing the weird and the curious in other cultures), but how does this culture respond to the comprehensive needs of the community? How do the various elements hold together? Is there an inner harmony, or are there contradictory, dehumanizing, self-destructive elements?

Every culture is a living organism It is not the product of the artificial combination of heterogeneous material It is the result of a historic dialogue between a human society and the ambient it lives in It is always in evolution When a culture evolves and changes in contact with another, we call the process 'acculturation' The cultures of minority communities are fighting for survival under the heavy impact of the cultures of larger societies or under pressure from what we call the 'Modern Culture'

Modern Culture and its Limitations

The progress of natural sciences, technology and communications, and the process of rapid urbanisation in parts of the world have led to the emergence of a type of 'Universal Civilization', or 'Modern Culture' In this context, the world 'culture' is used in a relative sense, having reference to those limited areas of common interest where the various world societies have reached a measure of consensus whether it concerns freedom, human rights, environment or certain other vital issues The areas of understanding are generally issue-based and limited, as for example the fields of commercial transaction codes of conduct (e g , in airports, five-star hotels world conferences), or international relationships. Hundreds of cultures with different world views, attitudes, value-systems, perceptions and sentiments, accommodate a little by their own choice or are compelled to yield some ground under pressure, to make place for 'Modern Culture' and the convenience of living and working together

The weakness of 'Modern Culture' is that it lacks a **Principle of Unity** A true synthesis has not yet been arrived at 'Modern Culture' has no definite inner identity It lacks a soul It has not yet developed into a 'living organism' It has rather preyed on the weaknesses of many living organisms (cultures of weaker societies) Whether 'Modern Culture' will one day come to life as a new living reality, and whether this is desirable, are questions beyond the scope of this paper

Church and Culture

The Church's encounter with culture has in no other period of history received as much attention as in our own days Despite the rare examples of Ricci or de Nobili, despite the oft-quoted 1659 instruction of the Propaganda Fide to missionaries,[1] despite the major contribution that evangelical pioneers have made in the field of the study and development of indigenous languages and cultures, a comprehensive understanding of culture and of its centrality in the fulfilment of the task of evangelization is beginning to emerge only in recent years.

Until of late, we spoke of the adaptation of missionary methods and the promotion of indigenous clergy. Today we are invited to look beyond matters of methods and approaches. It is not even a question of the Church accommodating to certain cultural characteristics It is, in actual fact, a question of the encounter between the Gospel itself and cultures the seed of the Gospel falling into the soil of a culture and, of itself, developing expressions of Christian life and worship, in keeping with the original genius of that particular people

Inculturation

The word 'inculturation' has come into use to refer to the above- mentioned question It occupies the central stage of all themes in missiology today Though the term has not been clearly defined, it has entered into the Church's official discourses Cardinal Ratzinger has recently suggested that the word 'inter-culturality' is preferable to 'inculturation' for the situation where the evangelizer meets a new culture Once the terms are defined, all things become clear! In anthropology 'inculturation' is a word used for the process by which a child is educated into its culture But this is not what happens in trans-cultural evangelization Here is a case of triangular interaction

1 First there is the culture of the Gospel with its Jewish-Hebrew background All through the history of the Church, people have been busy trying to isolate from the written material the essential message of Christianity that is universally valid and applicable

1 'Do not regard it as your task, and do not bring any pressure to bear on the peoples, to change their manners, customs, and uses, unless they are evidently contrary to religion and sound morals. What could be more absurd than to transport France, Spain, Italy, or some other European country to China? Do not introduce all that to them, but only the faith, which does not despise or destroy the manners and customs of any people, always supposing that they are not evil, or rather wishes to see them preserved unharmed. It is the nature of men to love and treasure above everything else their own country and that which belongs to it. '

2 Then there is the culture in which the evangelizer has grown up. His or her thinking and manner of working have been conditioned by that

3 Lastly, there is the culture of the community to which the Gospel is being announced.

So the word 'inculturation' has to be understood in the context of this triangular interaction However, we need not make the word itself the issue here We are concerned with concepts The word is acceptable, if we define 'inculturation' in any of the following ways

i The response of a culture to the first and ongoing announcement of the Gospel

ii The process by which the Christian life and message insert themselves into a particular culture, or incarnate themselves in a cultural community

iii The process which makes the message of Christ penetrate a socio-cultural ambient, promoting its genius and values

Evangelization — An Encounter between Persons

It is frequently affirmed that evangelization is an encounter between cultures I would rather emphasize that evangelization is an encounter between persons It certainly involves *also* an encounter between cultures But it is essentially an encounter between persons the encounter between the believer and the searcher And it can also be described as a triangular encounter, between Christ, the believer and the searcher, each conditioned by the culture with which each has been associated

Here I will not press the point that personal relationships can at times transcend cultures Think of two children at play totally oblivious of the barriers of language and culture that divide them, or of a young man and a foreign woman falling in love and not allowing anything to stand on the way of their intimacy I will not press the possibility that some great missionaries of the past, whose approaches are frowned upon by modern missiologists as 'uninculturated' may have had a far greater transcultural intimacy with their people through their sheer genius than many 'inculturated' missionaries who have gone no deeper than the mere externals.

But there is one thing I would like to emphasize: genuine inculturation begins with attention to persons, love and respect for persons (individuals and communities). Attention to cultural details that surround such persons comes as a consequence. Respect for persons means respect for them in their cultural world. Two

cultures which are like barriers keeping two persons apart are quickly transcended where there is true love and respect in the heart of the evangelizer and the searcher.

Like Christ, we must empty ourselves A genuine *kenosis* takes place. Though one never succeeds in totally renouncing one's original culture, one enters into a new world of attitudes, values and perceptions, adopts new forms of etiquette, other ways of relating and styles of behaving One is born again into a new culture. One vibrates with a new people We become one with a new community, like Paul who became a Jew to the Jews, a Greek to the Greeks and all things to all people In the mission thinking of today, unfortunately, inculturation too often tends to be confined to the external aspects of culture Persons seem to be bypassed and communities overlooked We should not forget that cultures are vibrant precisely in persons and communities We shall presently reflect on the central role that communities play in the field of inculturation

The Missionary's Role

From the way that inculturation is discussed today, one gets the impression that the main task of the missionary is to become an expert in the culture of the community to which the Gospel is being announced Here again, the primary attention shifts from persons to things This is not correct

I would like to suggest that the primary task of the evangelizer is two-fold to be attentive to Christ (therefore to be true to his message) and to be attentive to the people (to individuals and communities) Undoubtedly attention to people includes acquiring competence in their culture Nevertheless, it is attention to people (to the community, and especially to the soul of the community) that is most central

It is very important today to point out that inculturation itself is not the content of the Gospel. Discussions on cultures cannot replace the message of the Gospel The evangelizer's central task is to personalize the Word of God and transmit it truthfully to the community. The Word of God needs to be made intelligible to the community, articulated in their own cultural idiom The evangelizer has to be most diligent in applying himself or herself conscientiously to conveying the message in all its truth, in all its integrity and in all its power Even more importantly, the evangelizer presents a Christ whom he or she has encountered, until the searcher stands face to face with Christ Himself

Evangelizers must be equally attentive to the community that receives the Gospel They must be sensitive to its sensibilities, attentive to its reactions, capable of interpreting its manner of response Their attitude is one of humility They are ever eager to listen, to learn, to correct themselves They are not satisfied with their competence in the language or in their understanding of the externals of culture They are constantly in search of the soul of the community Their reflections are on the existential realities that reveal the inner world of the people, their attitudes and interests, the psyche of the community They set no score by any acquired expertise They are respectful of individuals, even if illiterate, in whom the genius of the community (tribe, ethnic group) vibrates. They hold their views open to revision While they are willing to share, they are happier to learn They step into the inner universe of the community with a sense of respect, awe and wonder[1]

The evangelizers' lives are marked by detachment They are ever so careful that their own cultural prejudices do not become an obstacle to the faithful communication of the Gospel, or to the growth and development of the local culture They only seek to awaken the original genius of the community (tribe, ethnic group) by the regenerating power of the Gospel Their ultimate goal is to bring the soul of the community face to face with Christ[1]

Such evangelizers are likely to make a far greater contribution to inculturation than the cultural expert who has no use for the community and its illiterate crowds

The Community — The Principal Agent of Evangelization

How does inculturation ultimately take place? The evangelizer presents the Word of God in the most authentic form to a community The seed falls into the soil of a particular culture And there it grows, by its own inner strength, and gradually reveals its hidden potentialities The Gospel message takes on new forms from the soil of that particular culture The soul of the community is stirred to life and it seeks to express its faith in a great variety of ways: in song and story music and art laws and relationships, organisation and activities prayer and worship

Inculturation cannot be pressed It cannot be pre-planned, programmed or test-tube produced It cannot be rushed It takes place by itself by its own strength, at its own pace It is a mysterious, hidden process It is the community that is at work, it is equally the seed of the Word of God at work; it is the soil of the particular

culture equally at work. The competence and initiatives of the evangelizers are of use only in so far as they themselves are a part of the community Their major contribution will be to ensure that the Word in its truest form falls to the heart of the community: which means, once again, attention to the Gospel and attention to the people An undue haste and zeal in pushing specific forms of inculturation over the heads of the people can do irreparable harm.

Inculturation cannot fail when the whole community is involved, when a true encounter has taken place between Christ and the people, when the Word has indeed fallen into the heart of the community (tribe, ethnic group, society). Fretful and interfering concern about inculturation on the part of the evangelizers will only reveal lack of confidence in the people and their culture on the one hand, and in Christ and his Gospel on the other That is why inculturation efforts that have ignored the sensitivities of people have not made much headway, and their fruits have remained superficial or marginal If the evangelizers only concentrated on the task of ensuring an effective encounter, they would immediately notice the difference.

The Soul of the Community

The recent discussions on inculturation have been overconcerned with peripheral matters An external superficial type of inculturation does no service to the Gospel and no good to the community How can the evangelizer take the Word to the heart of the community? How can he or she enter into dialogue with its soul? This is no easy matter Some people in history had this skill in a unique manner Such were the great missionary geniuses of the past who called entire populations to the faith, like Paul, Patrick, Boniface, Xavier, Lievens and other men and women of that stature

But every evangelizer can move in that direction Everyone at the service of the Gospel can develop this ability However, in order that this may happen, one must go beyond mere book knowledge of cultures Evangelizers must plunge into the life of the community. They must be close to the people, not only close to the thinking elements in society like teachers, writers and leaders, but also to the nameless crowds of peasants, workers and riotous youth. Cardinal Daneels has said that inculturation and the future of the Church depend a great deal on the anonymous crowds that populate the back of the church! They have faith! Culture is most vibrant among the most vibrant portion of the community.

In the above-mentioned process, the evangelizers pick up the

vibration and catch the mood of the people. They feel in themselves the aspirations and ambitions of the community They experience the inner struggles of their society in their own persons. (Would you think of Moses?) They are totally committed to its ultimate destiny At this stage, they stand at the 'mysterious' centre (the heart of the community), and the Word of God they offer falls in this very 'heart' And it may bear fruit a hundredfold It will!

No culture is perfect, or fully integrated There are contradictory, dehumanizing, destructive elements in every culture in some measure or other The Word of God, given adequate scope, acts from within and brings correction and healing The evangelizers keep faithful to their role of being the 'bearers of the Good News not just critical school-masters of their flocks

Every evangelizer is invited to walk this path of infinite possibilities Then another Xavier may walk our continent once again!

The Person of Christ

We have used the image of the Word of God falling into the soil of a particular culture and taking root there More correctly, it is Christ meeting the soul of a community and making it His own (Would you think of the Sinai encounter?) Evangelization is truly an encounter between persons When we refer to the Word of God, we do not mean merely a set of values and teachings We really mean the Person of Christ and all that He stands for He is unique It is not a question of Christian doctrines coming to replace another set of pre-Christian beliefs It is a question, rather, of Christ entering into dialogue with the Inner Self of the community The evangelizer has the privilege and joy of introducing one to the other

Effective inculturation will best be ensured not by lengthy debates on the theme, or by entering into controversies on the various ways of promoting culture, but by returning to the missionary dynamism of the early days, with great openness and great humility Christ becomes the centre of our announcement, and the community becomes the centre of our concern. Like in the early centuries wherever Christ was welcomed there was a flowering of culture, we can look forward with confidence that the same Christ will make a thousand cultures flower! Would that it happen in our own days!

VJTR 58 (1994) 15-32

Mimetic Desire and Sacred Violence

Understanding René Girard from the Indian context.

George PATTERY, S.J.

Since the sixties the sociology of the French René Girard offering a new understanding of violence has attracted the attention of scholars in the secular and religious sciences. Theologian George Pattery (St Xavier's College, Calcutta 700016) gives a summary of the simple yet complex theses of Girard, shows how theologians have reacted to them positively and negatively and points to their possible relevance for an Indian theology and an Indian dialogue of religions at a more sophisticated level than the banal platitudes of many of our dialogue sessions.

In the post-communist era free market economy and organized religion have acquired a new status and a cutting edge. Not a few are singing alleluia to the success of capitalism and technology, organized religions are reemerging with fundamentalist vigour. René Girard's theories on violence and the sacred provide us with a hermeneutic of suspicion on the uncontrolled march of capitalism and the millennial thrust of religions, exposing the mechanism of violence hidden in the modern social fabric and in the psyche of modern technological being. Girard's theory is also critical of all totalitarian communist and revolutionary systems that perpetuate violence in the name of justice. Interesting enough, Girard's theory seems to supply us with a hermeneutical key to highlight the non-violent dimensions of biblical revelation without reducing it to pious moralism.

Girardian thinking started off from literary criticism when he studied romantic deception in Greek mythology where the hero of the day could be distinguished from the dark figures of the night. He finds this mechanism at work in other major European literaturede

including Dante, Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky [1] In and through literature, Girard shows a profound knowledge of human psyche specially in the realms of human desire In this he is in the school of Freud and Sartre.

His study of anthropology, especially that of the so-called primitive societies of S America and of ancient African monarchies, convinced him of the power of passion in humans, as against reason Similarly, the study of ethnology revealed to him the immense power religion wields in society. In this, Girard is in the company of Durkheim who had interpreted tribal religions exclusively in terms of their social function Religious feeling is the individual's awareness of the group By combining human psychology and social sciences, Girard seems to have unearthed the tremendous power the exterior (the social institutions, especially religion) has on the individual He goes even further to claim a structural origin of all social units and is able to reach the foundations of the world, as it were In this attempt I rely on Girard's main works translated into English, and on the applications of his theory to biblical literature by R. Schwager and R Hamerton-Kelly.[2]

I. Anger, Sacrifice and Violence

Girard makes two important claims first, he identifies violence as the originating energy of social systems, second, he traces violence to the triangular nature of desire He does not conclude to this *a priori* His sources are literature and ethnology According to him, in all the so-called primitive societies, religion played a central role dominating both public and private lives The awesome sacred powers, especially of sacrificial rituals, constituted social reality

Sacrifice is a common factor in most societies, and often their features bear resemblance Sacrifice is a collective rite The sacrificial structure seems to fulfill a vital need of the 'primitive' society [3] Girard seems to go beyond Durkheim when he searches into the 'generative' principles of sacrificial rituals These generative prin-

1 Cf R. GIRARD *Deceit Desire and the Novel*, Baltimore Hopkins Press, 1965

2 R. SCHWAGER, *Must There be Scapegoats? Violence and redemption in the Bible* San Francisco Harper & Row 1987, R HAMERTON-KELLY *Sacred Violence Paul's Hermeneutics of the Cross* Minneapolis Fortress Press, 1992 Mention should also be made of James G. WILLIAMS's work, *The Bible Violence and the Sacred. Liberation from the myth of sanctioned violence* San Francisco Harper, 1991 As a biblical scholar, Williams explores the Bible from a Girardian perspective to reveal how the Bible expresses both the religious myth of sanctioned violence and the prophetic tradition that can liberate us from the tragic cycle of scapegoating and victimization.

3 Cf SCHWAGER, *Must There be Scapegoats?*, p.3.

ciples seem to be common to all, primitive or modern Hamerton-Kelly finds a post-structuralist trait in Girard in that he goes beyond the generative structures to penetrate the dynamics of those structures His conclusion is. "The energy is violence, the mechanism is the sacred, and the society is a system of sacred violence."[4]

Men and women are creatures of passion, especially of anger. Rage makes the human blind, angry humans resemble each other in their reactions According to Girard, anger, and not sex as Freud thought, is the hidden unconscious force that is at work in humans Sexuality is not so much a hidden force, as people who surrender to it are aware of it Angry humans, on the other hand, chance upon any object in sight Anger creates enemies and is blind towards its adversaries In this particular reaction, humans differ from animals Animals have both kill-instinct and kill-inhibition[5] Humans can distance the enemy and continue attacking the adversary as and when they want Reason instead of coming to the rescue often invents ways and means to intensify anger

In humans beings anger is blind and so can easily be tricked and diverted, it can thus conspire with the enemy, and at the right moment, seize upon a surrogate victim and satisfy its raging hunger[6] This insight into the blind fury of rage and the social function of tribal religion makes Girard ask whether ritual sacrifices were not secretly aimed at giving violence a substitute object by a regulated process and thus neutralized its dangerous power The victims were chosen from the weaker sections of the tribe (slaves, children or women) whose death would not trigger off vengeance. This was how sacrificial rituals emerged Sacrificial rituals fulfil a very comprehensive function in the social fabric

> [ ] all the dissensions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels within the community the sacrifices are designed to suppress The purpose of the sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric Everything else derives from that If once we take this fundamental approach to sacrifice, choosing the road that violence opens before us, we can see that there is no aspect of human existence foreign to the subject, not even material prosperity When men no longer live in harmony with one another, the sun still shines and the rain falls, to be sure, but the fields are less well tended, the harvest less abundant[7]

4 HAMERTON-KELLY, *Sacred Violence*, p 18

5 If the vanquished animal shows its most vulnerable spot to the aggressor the latter stops fighting. Cf Stephan STRASSER, in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, XIV, No.1 p.224, also Konrad LORENZ, *On Aggression* New York. Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966

6 GIRARD, *Violence and the Sacred* Baltimore The John Hopkins University Press, 1979, p 4.

7 *Violence and the Sacred*, p.8

Girard substantiates this ethnological finding also from his study of the Greek tragedies [8]

II. Desire Mimesis and Violence

How and where does the process of anger, violence and sacrifice originate? Girard attributes this to the fundamental structure of human desire

> Once his basic needs are satisfied (indeed, sometimes even before), man is subject to intense desires, though he may not know precisely for what The reason is that he desires *being*, something he himself lacks and which some other person seems to possess. The subject thus looks to that other person to inform him of what he should desire in order to acquire that being If the model, who is apparently already endowed with superior being, desires some object, that object must surely be capable of conferring an even greater plenitude of being It is not through words, therefore, but by the example of his own desire that the model conveys to the subject the supreme desirability of the object [9]

This existential desire is imitative or mimetic It functions by imitating someone else's desire for an object The model of the desire operates like the 'mediator' Desire recognizes the mediator's desire for an object, and desires it because the mediator desires it. There is therefore a triangular dimension to this desire — from the subject through the mediator to the object It is Dostoyevsky, and not Freud that influenced Girard in his theory on desire

The subject mediator relationship, though started on an admiration note, can at any moment change into rivalry as the object is more intensely and closely sought after Mimesis which has turned itself into acquisitive leads inevitably into conflictual mimesis [10] Hamerton Kelly explains it thus "Violence is therefore the relationship between desire and the mediator-becoming-an-obstacle in the process of the development of mimetic rivalry, which is the process of the movement of the planes of the mediator and the subject with respect to one another "[11] Thus the instigator of desire becomes the obstacle of its fulfillment But at the same time desire needs a rival to survive because its fulfillment is its end Thus rivalry is built into the very structure of desire

> The unchannelled mimetic impulse hurls itself blindly against the obstacle of a conflicting desire It invites its own rebuffs, and these rebuffs will in turn strengthen the mimetic inclination We have, then,

8 Ibid pp 44 46 47

9 Ibid p 146

10 R Girard *Things Hidden from the Foundation of the World* London. The Athlone Press 1978

11 Hamerton Kelly *Sacred Violence* p.20

a self-perpetuating process, constantly increasing in simplicity and fervour. Whenever the disciple borrows from his model what he believes to be the 'true' object, he tries to possess that truth by desiring precisely what this model desires. Whenever he sees himself closest to the supreme goal, he comes into violent conflict with a rival.[12]

Human desire wants to overcome, and be overcome by, the enemy and rivalry. Desire is mimetic, acquisitive and conflictual. It does not desire the desire of the other directly but only as mediated through the imitation of the other's desire for an object. Gradually the object is lost sight of; the desire becomes the desire not merely to possess what the other desires, but to possess the being of the other. Hamerton-Kelly finds three stages in this process: (i) desire imitates the desire of the other for the object; (ii) the self replaces the object in the desire of the other; (iii) by replacing the object the self seeks to possess not only the desire of the other but its own desire as it is mimetically in the other.[13] There is thus a sort of double mediation between the subject and the mediator, or a 'double imitation'. Girard describes this fundamental human structure of desire as "metaphysical desire" because it is rooted in the subject's lack of being and the conviction that mediator can supply that lack. The obstacle in the heart of desire gives painful purpose to one's ever-frustrated and thus ever-renewed desire. "Violence, therefore, is the actualization of mimetic propensity as rivalry, through the process of the mediator becoming the obstacle."[14] Violence is the deformation of desire, climaxing in the killing of the surrogate victim.

According to Hamerton-Kelly, the arms race, stock markets and *haute couture*, are all led by mimetic desire. 'To be the envy of the other' is the motivating factor. It is not the intrinsic value of a thing but its exchange value that matters, art is bought for the sake of its investment potential, books are written for market value, the market defines our likes and dislikes, there is little freedom in the so-called free market system. "It is a network of bondage to one another's imagined likes and dislikes, an essentially fantastic web of servitude to the phantoms of desire."[15]

Girard claims that the mimetic structure is fundamental to human desire and that at the origins of systems and human relations this mimetic dynamism is at work.[16]

12. *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 148.
13. *Sacred Violence*, p. 22.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
16. *Things Hidden from the Foundations of the World*, pp. 6-7, 26-33.

III. Surrogate Victim and the Emerging Sacred

The mimetic and the conflictual rivalry of the triangular relationship inevitably leads to victimization of surrogate objects. First, in the advanced stage of rivalry, the object gets obscured, secondly, there is the spontaneous agreement of the mutually intimidated rivals to transfer violence to a vulnerable substitute. The rivals' desire to destroy each other can be deflected onto a substitute. The surrogate victim appears as the temporary resting place of desire and this gives the originating and organizing moment of human social systems. The acquisitive and conflictual mimesis ends up in a surrogate victim and thus unites rather than destroys the community. All cannot acquire the victim but all can unite against the victim. Internal disturbances are thus safely deflected towards the outside, onto a substitute. It is to be noted that the rivals are not aware of the mimetic nature of their action and their transfer mechanism. They are simply fascinated by the ensuing peace. As Schwager says, "In a confused and discordant society in which all members suffer from internal conflicts, a random altercation that leaves one protagonist victorious over another can fascinate to such a degree that others instinctively imitate the deed and join in striking the momentarily weaker animal."[17]

The victim unifies the rivals, the victim is the catalyst. The rival attributes causality to the victim and thus hides his/her own violence. The first illusion is, therefore, "the illusion of the supremely active and all-powerful victim."[18] The victim is transposed above the group as the transcendent source of order and repository of disorder. It is thus divinized. Hamerton-Kelly qualifies it as the critical moment of 'double transference' when the cause of violence and the cause of peace are transferred from the mob and are misattributed to the victim:

> It is the creative response of the human group to the 'creativity' of its own deformed desire in spontaneously generating the surrogate victimage solution to the problem of its violence. Violence was not repressed or cast off into the unconscious, but was detached and transformed into culture by being transferred to the victim.[19]

Once the victim is given the divine status, it is the cause of mimetic disorder and of surrogate-victim order. It takes vengeance on transgressors and enforces ritual sacrifices in order to maintain order. According to Girard, this double ordering is the foundational lie of all cultures, systems and bad faith, making the victim

17 *Must There be Scapegoats?* p 18

18 *Things Hidden from the Foundations of the World* p 52

19 *Sacred Violence* p 27

the transcendent signifier The victim determines human behaviour, not through what has really happened, but through a misinterpretation or misrepresentation of what happened The hermeneutic of all cultures is the misinterpretation of the original event, in terms of prohibition, myth and ritual The victim is that sign of order and disorder that all prohibition, ritual and myth seek to represent, and the summary term for this sign is the SACRED.

Two traditions of the sacred are emerging· the Durkheimian tradition, in which Girard stands, sees religion as the primary expression of the power that forms society and rituals as the essence of religion M Eliade, on the other hand, finds religion as a response to the experience of the *a priori* sacred, understood as ontologically prior to the individual or society, and sees myth and rituals as the responses to the manifestations of the sacred. Against this Girard holds that the sacred itself is the product of society "The group generates the sacred through the double transference onto the victim, and the sacred in turn mandates prohibition, ritual and myth "[20] 'The sacred is the mendacious representation of human violence

> The sacred is the sum of human assumptions resulting from collective transference focused on a reconciliatory victim at the conclusion of a mimetic crisis Far from being a leap into the irrational, the sacred constitutes the only hypothesis that makes sense for human beings as long as these transferences retain their power [21]

Although the sacred experience included that of tempests, fires and plagues, its primary content is violence understood as being or lack of being Girard puts it rather bluntly "Violence is the heart and secret soul of the sacred "[22] The sacred is violence misrepresented by the double transference In fact all hierarchies, all social systems, are sacrificial structures of violence

The basic components of the social system are prohibition, rituals, and myths Prohibitions exist to prevent mimetic rivalry Prohibitions have much to do with the sacred The victim or the sacred is not to be possessed. It has to be differentiated from the group The sacred and the profane are to be distinguished The sacred is thus relegated into a rival In fact the entire legal system is, in Girardian perspective, a rationally controlled vengeance [23] Law is the myth of vengeance, it conceals its origin in sacred violence It is the order of 'good violence' Similarly the sacrificial system generates rules to keep people in their proper non-mimetic places and uses

20 *Ibid.*, p.29

21 *Things Hidden since the Foundations of the World*, p.42

22 *Violence and the Sacred*, p.31

23 *Sacred Violence*, p.32 In fact this was also the Gandhian perspective He found the

surrogate victims to keep violence in its proper ritual channel Myth is the reinterpretation or the misrepresentation of the founding murder from the point of view of the murderers

IV. Hermeneutical Value of the Girardian Theory

Girard's conclusions and claims have been subjected to severe analysis and criticism [24] The principal merit of his findings however lies in its hermeneutical value, specially in religious studies Girard's theory not only elaborates on the mechanisms of a deformed desire, but seems to suggest ways and means to follow a genuine mimesis that does not lead to rivalry and violence The double transference that leads to the killing of the surrogate victim can be reversed by returning violence to its proper place and desacralizing the victim As Hamerton-Kelly says, Girard's theory can become 'a deconstructive hermeneutic of suspicion' [25] More particularly sacred violence as a theory and method of interpretation has been applied to biblical literature In this, Girard distinguishes two levels of meaning in a text the generative and the thematic At the generative level, the text in its logic, style and genre, conceals the founding mechanism of various institutions of religion state and judiciary, which can be traced back to the triangular relationship of desire, violence and sacrifice The thematic level can either reveal or conceal this operation According to Girard, myth at the thematic level conceals the mechanism while 'gospel' reveals it Girard claims that the Bible is a critical text that offers the hidden mechanism to create a culture beyond violence He has attempted to apply this theory to biblical literature [26] There have been two other major attempts in this regard R Schwager has approached biblical literature from the point of violence and redemption, and has to a great extent substantiated Girard's claims Recently Hamerton Kelly has done detailed and insightful study of Pauline literature from a Girardian perspective [27]

V. Violence and Redemption in the Bible

Schwager is a systematic theologian He does not attempt a

entire modern social systems as violently founded and perpetuated Therefore his attempts to reduce violence in all walks of life

24 *Violence and Truth* ed by Paul Dumouchel London The Athlone Press, (1988) is one such work that presents a critical and interpretative study of Girard by various authors

25 *Sacred Violence* p 41

26 Cf *Things Hidden Since the Foundations of the World*, 1987, *Job the Victim of His People* 1987 *The Scapegoat* 1986 All from the Athlone Press, London

27 See note 2

detailed exegetical study of all the OT texts. He applies Girard's hermeneutical framework to biblical literature in order to find out whether Girard can be vindicated and whether biblical texts are better understood. Examining the various OT texts that deal with violence, he holds that violence is the human activity that is most talked about in the OT. There are about 600 passages that discuss violence. Individual killings, jealousy, hatred and wars get prominent treatment in the OT literature. When Joshua conquered the land we are told "he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed" (Josh 10.40). The cumulative term for all human sins is violence. "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen 6.11). In the Prophetic and Wisdom literatures, Schwager finds two important generalizations: all interhuman transgressions are summed up under the term 'violence', no human being is exempt from this violent urge.[28]

The OT expression of a 'violent Yahweh' is made more intelligible in a Girardian perspective. Yahweh is described as 'divine warrior' and over 1000 texts refer to divine vengeance. Sifting through the material on the violent Yahweh, Schwager concludes that the mention of divine violence and vengeance is partly due to the sacralization of human violence and its projection onto God. Similarly the divine retribution that the OT speaks of does not so much describe God's act of punishment as the consequences of human violence falling back upon the human race. God turns away from the humans or rather the humans crawl away from God and the consequence is that violence falls back upon the humans. Schwager claims that much of the otherwise unintelligible OT texts on divine wrath and vengeance are made intelligible by the Girardian hermeneutic.[29]

Mimesis, jealousy and rivalry abound in the OT as seen in the stories of Cain and Abel, Joseph and his brothers, Saul and David, etc. Much of these can be traced back to the mimetic consequences of human desire. In fact Israel's sin of idolatry also stems from mimesis. Israel coveted the military, political and economic success of the foreign peoples; it was in order to appropriate this material success that Israel imitated the worship of foreign idols. The actual cause of Israel's idolatry did not come from theoretical and theological considerations. It was greed that made Israel follow foreign gods. This is illustrated in the parables of the unfaithful women (Ezek 16:1-63) and of the two shameless sisters (Ezek 23.1-49).

---

28. *Must There be Scapegoats?*, pp. 47-53

29. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-65

The spontaneous and blind ganging together of the violent 'many' against the afflicted 'one' seems to be present in the Psalms (Pss 2, 22, 31, 118), in the Prophets (Mic 4 11-12, Zech 12:2-3) and in the Sapiential Literature (Wis 17) where the fate of the righteous individual sufferer is described This is also the plight of Israel [30]

The generative meaning of a text that hides the founding mechanism of violence is pervasively present in the OT According to Schwager's analysis Girard is vindicated That is not all. The second level of meaning, namely the thematic that reveals the founding mechanism, also seems to be present in the OT The gradual and real revelation of God exposes the hidden violent mechanism and manifests a love that is truly divine The biblical revelation works in the opposite direction of mimetic violence Schwager finds this process unravelling itself in and through the trust and promise of covenantal relationship (as against acquisitive and conflictual mimesis), through the stories of David and Jonathan (love beyond rivalry), through the prophetic word and critique of sacrifices and idolatry (true worship and power as righteousness and justice), through the psalmist in his utter reliance on the Lord (not to imitate the enemy), and through God's promise of a new gathering of the remnant The most significant development in this revelatory process, according to Schwager, is the theme of the Suffering Servant in the songs of Second Isaiah (Is 42 1-9, 49 1-6, 50 4-9, 52 13-53 12) The new and the decisive factor in this development is the reaction of the Servant shown as the victim of the violent Instructed by God, the Servant does not think of revenge or follow the human mimesis For Schwager, the Second Isaiah contains the surest and clearest pedagogy of God in unmasking violence "The process of revelation is thus technically identical with the overcoming of violence among men and women "[31]

VI. The Newness of Revelation in the New Testament.

The Suffering Servant theme in the OT serves as the background for reading the gospel Two perspectives emerge from the NT The first is primarily negative The ministry and the teaching of Jesus represents a decisive revelation of the hidden will to kill

30 Ibid pp 96-108

31 *Must There be Scapegoats?* p 119; cf also pp.109-135 Cf also T R. Hobbs and P K. Jackson, "The Enemy in the Psalms," *Bib Theol Bulletin* Vol. 21/1, 1991 Independent of Girard, N Lohfink has studied the question of the violent God in the Bible and has come to the conclusion that there is an emerging revelation of a non-violent God and society in the OT This he does by means of an analysis of the concept of the poor leading up to the theme of the Suffering Servant. Cf "The Violent God of the Old Testament and the Quest

and lie His indictment of the Pharisees (liars and murderers from the beginning) and the prediction of the destruction of the temple exposes the hidden mechanism of violence and evil in society. The unmasking of evil invites sharp opposition to Jesus The hermeneutical key that opens the NT knowledge, according to Girard and Schwager, is found in Mk 12. The collective blindness and the exposition of that blindness through the death of the beloved serve the process of true revelation [32] The passage is also found in Acts 2.23, 3 13, 4·9-12, 13.27-30

Positively, Jesus brought out the divine pedagogy in his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount, in his gathering of the new community of table fellowship beyond human mimesis, and above all in his non-acquisitive and non-conflictual relationship to his Father But this exposition of the hidden violence and of the divine pedagogy are bound to provoke opposition from the violent The violent gang up against the innocent and the result is murder The universality of the opposition to Jesus is the result of the deep-seated resentment against God brought about by the lack of self-acceptance in the humans But God allows his Son to be made the scapegoat for human sin, carrying the sin of the world in his total obedience and self-offering Through the death on the cross, the divine love so engulfs men and women that it exposes and conquers all evil and hatred in an all-embracing love Human violence is not allowed to fall back on the human race. The sacrifice on the cross overcomes all scapegoating sacrifices, it is a victimization that exposes all victimizations Qualitatively, a new type of relationship emerges [33]

Schwager has elaborated a theory of redemption from the theme of the scapegoat mechanism.[34] We shall not dwell on it further Suffice it to note that Schwager has vindicated the Girardian theory from the NT perspective

VII. Pauline Theology and Sacred Violence

Hamerton-Kelly of Stanford University uses the hermeneutic of Girard to postulate a creative rendering of Paul's theology of the cross, of sin and of the law. He finds in Pauline literature the basic structure of violent mechanism and the God-given antidote

for a Non-Violent Society " Rome: The Pontifi. Biblical Institute, 1983 (mimeographed notes)

32. *Must There be Scapegoats?* Pp. 139-140.

33. *Ibid.*, pp.140-220

34. Cf. R. Schwager, "Christ's Death and the Prophetic Critique of Sacrifice," *Semeia*, 33, 1985; "The Theology of the Wrath of God," in *Violence and Truth*, 1988; *Der Wunderbare Tausch: Zur Geschichte und* [illegible]

to it We shall attempt a very brief presentation of some of his insights in order to show how much Girard has contributed to biblical reading today

Adam, for Paul, is the symbol of the human condition, and he looks at the story of Adam in the light of the Cross Hamerton-Kelly claims that a Girardian reading of the passages in Genesis will help us understand Paul better, specially the letter to the Romans

> Adam's story tells how desire, freely corrupted itself by choosing the possibility represented by the serpent to desire acquisitively the prohibited object and thus enter into a relationship of mimetic rivalry with God [35]

The serpent exaggerates the prohibition and misrepresents it to mean that God himself is desirous of the tree of knowledge The human desire thus converts God into a rival, makes God envious and mimes God's desire Eve takes the bait and concludes that she is being excluded from something that is valuable She imbibes thus the spirit of rivalry through the misrepresentation of the prohibition by the serpent "Thus desire transforms God from creator, to whom one should be related in gratitude, into rival, to whom one is related by envy and it does so by manipulating the prohibition (Rom 7 11)"[36] The misrepresentation of the prohibition induced a sense of lack in Eve and made her believe that God had what she lacked 'Out of envy God withholds from us the secret of being and once we realize this we reach out beyond the prohibition to acquire it "[37] The prohibition originally meant to prevent humanity form self-destruction through acquisitive mimesis, it reflected human sufficiency (and not human lack) in trusting fidelity to God as creator The misrepresentation of the divine desire is the paradigm of the misrepresentation of all desires Hamerton-Kelly remarks

> Once the principle of lack has been installed in the heart of desire, acquisitive and conflictual mimesis follow Everyone now becomes model and obstacle, and the game of mimetic rivalry among humans is underway Human being is unwilling to accept its ontological contingency and turns it into a lack of being that can in principle be supplied [38]

The real motive for sin is distrust of God or lack of faith in God The humans turn God into a rival and hold a resentment against God They are unable to imitate him creatively as co-creators

35 R. HAMERTON-KELLY *Sacred Violence*, p 92.
36 *Ibid.*, p 93
37 *Ibid.*, p 93
38 *Ibid.* p 94

Hamerton-Kelly holds that the Pauline concept of the universality of sin in Romans can be better understood from a Girardian perspective

> To sin with reference to death, therefore, is to live in the world of sacred violence that is cemented and sustained by the brother's blood, and covered over by our erotic love of death. Every act within this system is a "sin with reference to death," because it is part of the conspiracy to kill and cover up the body of the founding victim. Adam set up this system, therefore, his sin is unique, we all freely collaborate with it, therefore his sin is typical.[39]

Similarly the Mosaic law and its grip on the Jewish community can be explained from within the order of sacred violence. Law represents the myth of rationally controlled vengeance, and is an instrument of sacred violence. It is also an expression of the primal prohibition against mimetic rivalry and its basic thrust is love of God and neighbour. Judaism according to Paul distorted it into the ideology of Jewish separatism and made it an instrument of mimetic rivalry. The Pauline strategy is to use the law in order to overcome the law.[40] Similarly, for Paul sinful flesh represents the system of violence and basic enmity with God. Redemption is from both the Mosaic Law and the sinful flesh. The closed system of Law and sinful flesh have to be opened up to a non-acquisitive and non-conflictual love on the cross.

The death of Jesus on the cross exposes the mechanism of sacred violence operating through the instrumentality of the Mosaic law. This is no longer a sacrificial transaction that appeases the sacred but a divine offering that surpasses human mimesis and represents our violence without allowing it fall back upon us. "... the crucifixion is the crux of God's plan for unmasking and overthrowing the powers of this world, understood through the Cross as the structures of the Sacred."[41] The powers of this world worked through the sacred religious institutions. The only choice for Paul is to go over to the side of the victim, the crucified.

> To mime the victim is to see the truth about oneself in the mirror of the victim, decoding the transference so that the representation appears as the representation of one's own mimetic rivalry and surrogate victimage. In this sense one can say that once we conclude that one has died representing all, then it follows that all have died, because they see in his death the effects of their mimetic rivalry and can therefore freely renounce it by choosing to mime the nonacquisitive desire of the victim, and thus "crucify the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24). The Christian subject is, therefore, constituted

39. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

mimetically within the community of the crucified, as Christ represents the community and the community represents Christ[42]

To enter the Christian community is to identify with the crucified Co-crucifixion is part of the baptismal theology, identifying with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection The word of the cross therefore reveals the founding mechanism of violence masked in rituals, myth and philosophies Christian faith also demands that the crucified should not be used to promote Jesuolatry but should be seen as the revelation of sacred violence and a challenge to grow into a non-acquisitive and non-conflictual love of God and neighbour It calls for a new non-violent creation, not based on power and principalities It exposes human sin and discloses divine love

We shall limit ourselves to these insights in Hamerton-Kelly's application of Girard's hermeneutics to the theology of Paul Girard has raised some serious issues which neither theology nor scripture can afford to ignore That the challenge comes from a non-theological tradition is all the more reason to look into some of our theological assumptions Perhaps Girard's contribution questions the hitherto one-sided reliance of theology on strictly rational philosophy for its self-understanding

VIII. An Appraisal of Girard's Hermeneutics from the Indian Context

a) Contributions towards theological thinking

Since the eighties in particular, the Indian sub-continent watches in stupefied horror the bloodthirst that has overtaken our land Movements — religious and secular — are launched with violence and quelled with violence Its victims are Muslims, Hindus, Harijans, Brahmins, women children No doubt, we are passing through one of the most violent periods in our history This is not to condone the violence perpetuated in other parts of the world We need to come to grips with this violent phenomenon Violence *per se* should find a place in the agenda of Indian theology Girard challenges us to address this issue

Much of the violence in our country today has a sacred character to it It takes place in the name of gods, religions, precepts and community identities It is sacred violence and therefore it is deep-rooted and all-pervasive Even if one does not agree with Girard, it must be admitted that he cannot be totally ignored in a multi-

42 *Ibid.*, p 70

religious communal context.

From a Girardian perspective, the free market system is "an essentially fantastic web of servitude to the phantoms of desire." The much advertised new economic policy and open market system in our country, and the loss of face of socialism, even among the politicians, have to be re-evaluated in the light of Girardian perspective.

Any broom is good enough to beat liberation theology. The collapse of communism has been a handy weapon in the hands of the theological vested interests to demote liberation and promote a particular type of millennial evangelism. The Girardian hermeneutics seem to question any 'gospel' that does not opt for and with the victim because that is the essence of the divine pedagogy. Dalit theology need not be simply one of the theologies, and 'empowering the poor' need not be a frightening category for the believers. Liberation theology derives a new respectability from within the biblical dynamics.

To Girard's credit, we must admit that mimetic desire is more encompassing, both in its negative and positive aspects, than erotic desire. This can be verified from day-to-day individual behaviour and from the way social institutions function. The ancient wisdom of Hinduism and Buddhism seem to have recognized and acknowledged 'desire' as basic human issue to be dealt with. Moral theology seems to be wanting in tools to wrestle with basic anthropological issues.

Mention should be made here of the theological contributions of Sebastian Moore.[43] He starts with the proposition that "we all desire to be desired by one we desire" and studies its negative connotations in terms of sin, guilt and hopelessness. He finds the opposite of "failing the other" in the total Otherness of Jesus, specially in his total fidelity to the Father. The theological contributions of Moore seem to indirectly support Girard's theory. Both Girard and Moore highlight the ancient theological tradition that speculative intelligence should not be separated from the heart. Theology devoid of spirituality adds up to nothing.

Girardian hermeneutic helps us read the Bible as one unit, in an essential unity between the Old and New Testaments. The same thread of divine pedagogy is knitting together both the Testaments through a prolonged and gradual revelation in a counter-movement to human mimesis.

43. Cf. Sebastian MOORE, *The Crucified Is No Stranger*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1977. On his own admission, S. MOORE is strongly influenced by Ernest BECKER's *The Denial of Death*. New York: Free Press, 1973.

The sacred violence theory also helps us surmount the embarrassment of reading the passages on a violent Yahweh and his vengeance on the humans Much of the violence in the OT can be explained as sacred violence projected by the humans

The anthropological thrust of the mimetic theory holds significance for our understanding of faith It implies a realistic perception of human nature both in its potentiality to respond to God's invitation and in its tendency to fall into the mimetic cycle. Faith demands therefore an active and personal response to God in his divine pedagogy, and turning our back on the mimetic rivalry The noetic and the personal dimensions of the faith response can be well explained from Girard's perspective Salvation — personal and social — has to be worked out in 'fear and trembling'

Similarly, spirituality means a dynamic and on-going growth into the divine pedagogy and an equal dynamic and continuous growing out of the human mimetic tangle, both at the personal and social levels

In an Indian perspective, religiosity (religious pluralism) and poverty are two of our major concerns These are not totally unrelated issues, as A Pieris has so authoritatively shown [44] On the one hand, religions through their sacred violence seem to perpetuate the violence of poverty or ignore the poverty of the masses, on the other hand, 'voluntary' poverty and the option for the poor (choosing to be the victim) seem to be the true religiosity that emerges from the divine pedagogy to counter sacred violence A religious dialogue worth its name cannot ever ignore the question of poverty Neither can the fight against poverty ignore the relevance of religions The hermeneutic of sacred violence brings these two issues into focus and challenges us to address them together

The sacred violence theory supplies comparative religion with a new agenda There is perhaps scope for a new exegesis of scriptures to unearth the mechanism of violence and non-violence inherent in them Inter-faith engagements need not be restricted to pious prayer meetings and platitudes A thorough research into the inner dynamics of the scriptures and on the role of religions is called for Liberating commitments to expose the mechanism of violence and to create non-violent human communities cannot be relegated to a few social activities [45]

---

44. Cf *An Asian Theology of Liberation* New York, Orbis Books, 1988. On the ashram-centred spirituality that tends to ignore questions of poverty, Pieris remarks. "There is a tendency to create or perpetuate a 'leisure class' through 'prayer centres' and 'ashrams' that attract the more affluent to short spells of mental tranquility rather than a life of renunciation." *An Asian Theology of Liberation* p 42.

b) Further enquiry required

From a negative perspective, however, one wonders whether or not Girard is falling into a sort of reductionism, finding violence at the root of all institutions. The *a posteriori* verification that Girard claims to have done from his study of ethnology does not amount to such a generalization as to extend his theory to all institutions and to the very 'foundations of the world' As Peter Tijmes has pointed out, a single historical and foundational collective murder is insufficient to explain ritual sacrifices and the rich symbolic life of various religions [46] Even when we grant validity to the role of the collective murder mechanism, we may not be justified in reducing the origins of all institutions to this mechanism alone.

Girard is definitely working under a linear concept of history, and the foundational mechanism fits in very well there In another world-view, where history is viewed cyclically as in Indian philosophy, the Girardian theory may not be easily verified. Besides, mimesis and collective surrogate murder have perhaps cyclic and recurrent features in them, if so, why should we attribute a foundational and lasting character to the first murder?

It is possible that the humans, in their 'original innocence' (a theme prevalent in all major cultures), envisaged a social system based on their inner worth as creatures in the image of God Instead of the propensity towards violence, they would have employed their capability as image of God to build systems and institutions based on 'social contracts' However Hamerton-Kelly has argued in defense of Girard that "the stage of non-rivalrous desire exists as a perpetual possibility, but never as a historical actuality "[47] There is room here for further inter-disciplinary research

The Hindu 'dharma' seems to have envisaged a social system and way of life based on the 'original harmony' of beings The ongoing struggle is to maintain this '*rta*' The Hindu philosophy is thus based on a positive outlook on the human race.

The sacred has been reduced to human need and projection, and revelation has been described as the handiwork of God from above as it were, of course through his word and agents. Human experience and revelation have been so distanced as to appear opposed to one another. Girard sounds Barthian in the application of his theory to the Bible. If we hold that creation itself is God's

45 See for example Subhash ANAND's study "Khandavadaha. A Lesson in Ecology," in *Annals BORI*, LXXI, 1990, pp 25-59

46. Cf *Sacred Violence*, p 195

47 *Ibid.*, p 197.

revelation, and that this-worldly realities have sacramentality in them, and that God's revelation is continued in creation, then it is rather difficult to view divine revelation simply as a counter-movement of all that is human.

When applied to biblical revelation, there seems to be in the Girardian theory a tendency to reduce revelation to a sort of 'gnosis', to a noetic awareness of the divine pedagogy in Jesus Christ. Consequently the Girardian reading of the Bible insists on the 'redemptive' role of revelation, and thus seems to underplay the incarnational and sacramental aspects of revelation It is noteworthy that R. Schwager, the best known exponent of Girardian theory in theology, elaborates much on the redemptive theories in theology[48]

The Girardian hermeneutics, applied to biblical literature, seem to present Christian revelation as the only divine way of responding to the mimetic rivalry of the humans That may not always promote genuine inter-faith enterprises An impartial study of faith and revelation in other religions might show another way of understanding violence and a different method of dealing with it

In conclusion it may be admitted that Girard deserves a hearing from Indian theology Gandhiji, the best exponent and advocate of non-violence, did not look so much into the origins of violence, as he was more interested in dealing with it and resolving it at various levels Girard, on the other hand, probes into the origins of violence and thus throws much light into the possible ways of dealing with it In the process he finds a hermeneutical key to read the Bible Can we usefully employ this key to a reading of the scriptures of all religions?[49] Will that contribute towards a greater understanding among cultures? Can it provide a common platform of action linking culture, dialogue and liberation? Basic human concerns, as found in the work of Girard, should bring us together on a search that is inter-disciplinary, inter-cultural and inter-religious

48. See foot note no. 34.

49 In fact the colloquium on violence and religion based in the department of religion at Syracuse University. U S.A is exploring the possible outreach of Girard's theory, specially the mimetic model of the relationship between violence and religion in the genesis and maintenance of culture.

VJTR 58 (1994) 33-47

Integral Education of Youth: Formal and Informal Setting

Hubert A. MONTEIRO

Speaking in a forum dealing with the problems of Faith and Science, a scientist from the field of industry reflects on the impact, negative and positive, of science and technology on the Third World, focusing specially on problems of ecology In a second instalment of the article he will draw the consequences for the education of youth Dr Monteiro's address is Rebello House, Flat 53, Hill Road, Bandra, Bombay 400050

The purpose of education is to impart knowledge to, stimulate learning by and inculcate values in students, in particular, and the public in general It should enable and motivate them, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, lead integrated lives in harmony with the environment, and use their talents at the service of society

Since I will be laying great stress on value education, it is necessary to study the impact of science and technology on some of our value systems, so as to build on their beneficial effects and counter their negative influences Important issues that will arise from this study are a concern for the environment and a social responsibility in using scientific and technological resources in the eradication of poverty in the context of a sustainable development

I. Impact of Science and Technology on the Third World

The impact of science and technology will be discussed under four heads. Religion versus Agnosticism, Traditional Culture versus Modernity; Consumerism versus Poverty; Control of Nature versus Environmental Pollution

1. Religion versus Agnosticism

In *'The Secular City'* Harvey Cox aptly designates the modern world as a technopolis, so conditioned is it by the impact of tech-

nology [1] To describe the effects of science and technology in this technopolis, Cox employs the term "secularisation" which he defines as "the loosing of the world from a religious and quasi-religious understanding of itself, the breaking of supernatural myths, the deliverance of man from religious and metaphysical control over his reason " He further analyses this process of secularisation in terms of the disenchantment of nature, the deconsecration of values and the desacralization of politics

Cox was, of course, referring mainly to trends or attitudes observed in the West in the late sixties Felix Wilfred makes a distinction between this Western understanding of the secular and the Eastern concept according to which the secular character of a state does not favour any one particular religion but is well disposed to all religions equally [2] The Indian expression *"sarva-dharma-samabhâva"* — treating all religions equally — epitomizes this idea In Wilfred's view, "the present-day turmoils of Asian societies derive from the fact that, instead of moving ahead with the Eastern understanding of the secular with its roots in tradition, one has tried to transport into Asian societies the Western understanding of the secular " Such an effect is evident in countries like Taiwan and India through surveys which have been carried out in the recent past Other countries, notably Japan, Korea and the Philippines appear to have weathered technological change while preserving their religious traditions

In Taiwan, where Buddhism, Taoism, Folk Religion and Christianity are the principal religions and where the influence of Confucianism is felt on all levels of Chinese society, approximately 52% the of students say that they have no religious faith [3] This figure is based on the results of two independent surveys, each of which had a sample size of about 1200 respondents to a questionnaire Interestingly, only 13 7% of the students felt that science led to the decline of religion or proved religion to be superstition. Adherents of Buddhism were observed to be the least likely to see a conflict between religion and science

Apart from the students, the Chinese as a whole appear to be irreligious, judging from texts quoted by Budenholzer and Chou "China is a country without religion and the Chinese are a people that are not bound by religious superstitions This is the conclu-

1 Harvey Cox *The Secular City* Penguin, 1965

2 Felix Wilfred "Asia on the Threshold of the 1990s." Paper presented at the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC Bandung, Indonesia, July 17-27, 1990

3 Frank E Budenholzer, and Schang-Shing Chou, "Science, Technology and Religion in Taiwan, China" *Atheism and Dialogue*, XXIV-2, 161-176 (1989)

sion arrived at by scholars during recent years. Confucianism has already met its fate, Buddhism has long been dormant, and Taoism has not had any favours (in recent years)" (Hu, quoted in *Choe* 1974, 120)

A study based on in-depth unstructured personal interviews conducted by Fr Aelred Pereira, S J., and myself on 64 scientists from Bombay revealed that 20 professed to be atheists or agnostics who rejected religion either because of indifference or because of its perceived incompatibility with science [4] Even among the so-called believing scientists, quite a few had only a weak commitment to religion and others did not attempt to harmonize their religious beliefs and their scientific knowledge. Said one Hindu research scientist

> I never question why I believe in religion I just accept it It is a non-scientific approach but I keep religion and science apart. I have no religious explanation for scientific beliefs and no scientific explanation for religious beliefs I do not seek any metaphysical proof of the existence of God

Even among non-scientists in India, the view expressed at a recent seminar in Bombay seems to sum up the situation· "There is no conflict between science and religion because, while science has failed to inculcate the scientific temper in our people, religion too has failed to inculcate true spirituality Hence, they follow neither the teachings of science nor religion to their logical conclusion " It must be pointed out in this connection that religion in India is still very traditional, whether practised by Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists or Zoroastrians

Sharply contrasting with these reports from Taiwan and India, is the conclusion of a survey carried out in Korea [5] In Korea, there is no significant opposition between science and religion an overwhelming 75% see science and technology not only not denying the validity of religious knowledge with 53% even positively asserting that science and technology have helped in the process of purification, strengthening and deepening of both Christianity and other religions A very weak 3% see religion as an obstacle for development and only 7.5% think that religion is not essential. This survey is based on 147 answers received in response to 347 questionnaires sent to professors and scientists Korea's religions include Taejonggyo, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity

---

4. Hubert A. Monteiro, "Science Technology and Religion the Indian Situation," *Atheism and Dialogue*, XXIV-1 (1989), 176-183

5 Jin Chang, Nung Min Yoon and Felix M. Villareal, "Faith and Science: a Country Report on Korea", *Atheism and Dialogue*, XXIV-1, (1989), 63-69

A report from the Philippines, a predominantly Catholic country, based on a survey of 305 respondents comprising of 220 scientists and 85 members of the clergy, echoes the same conclusion as the Korean report, but in an even more striking manner,[6] 94 5% strongly agreeing that God exists and that there is life after death, 84 5% of the scientists disagree that religion is incompatible with the development of science and technology This assertion is reinforced by an overwhelming 93 2% of them who do not view Christianity as an obstacle to the progress of science and technology

While I do not have any survey report on the Japanese situation, the prevalent view seems to be that, unlike other industrialized countries of the West, Japan, even with its advanced economy, has yet been able to retain its religious values to a large extent I quote Tomoaki Tsuchida[7]

> This para religious tradition of "do" (in which one enjoys the emergence of meaning out of a communion or a given situation utilized to produce the meaning intended or to materialize the purpose) has allowed the Japanese to embrace technology without worrying much about universal spiritual values, or cosmological relevance or theoretical consistency and has given an aura of sacramentality to whatever one is seriously engaged in

Scholars from outside too, perceive the Japanese experience as "the harmonious co-existence between science/technology and spiritual values seen as traditions "[8]

Apparently Islamic religious values are also affected by modern science Referring to "the application of a science based upon the forgetting of God and the working of God's will in the world of nature and of man, Seyyed Hussein Nasr laments the influence of this uncritical thinking in the Muslim world which, in his view, has produced a catastrophic result[9] Modern cosmology and evolutionary theory have been decried as being incompatible with Islamic teachings expounded in the Koran and the Hadith

It would thus appear that in Asia, some religions, particularly Buddhism, are better able to resist the negative influences of science and technology on them as is clear from the experiences of Japan, Korea and Taiwan What is very striking, however, is that

---

6 Norberto CASTILLO and Lilian SISON "Perceptions on Science, Technology and Religion a Country Report" *Atheism and Dialogue*, XXIV-1, (1989) 55-63

7 Tomoaki TSUCHIDA, "Modern Technology and East Asian Spiritualities," *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Science Technology and Spiritual Values* Tokyo, 25-29 May 1987 pp 221 233 263

8 Hassan HASSERI "Science Technology and Spiritual Values Possible Models and Historical Options," *ibid.*, pp 23-31

9 Syed Hussein NASR, "Science Education the Islamic Perspective," *ibid.*, pp 235-250

Christianity in the Philippines has been better able to survive the onslaught of science and technology as compared to the countries of the West

A word of caution is called for in interpreting survey results and in making general observations for a particular society External observances like attendance at Mass can give an impression of religiosity, but this may be only skin-deep It is usually necessary to probe more deeply the inner convictions of people to make an authentic assessment of a real religious spirit

2. Traditional Culture versus Modernity

Culture cannot remain static As the expression of the human reaction to the environment, culture is bound to change with the changing conditions of life Consequently, it is normal to expect that the drastic changes brought about by the advent of modern technology would engender cultural transformation. Such an effect is not necessarily bad What is deplorable, however, is that good and sound traditional values which enabled people to lead integrated lives in the past are often lost in the process

Science and technology are often accompanied by a certain dichotomy in the effects they produce on thought processes, attitudes and culture in general These effects are discernible not only in the West, but also, even more conspicuously, in Asian countries, including Korea and the Philippines, in which religious values are seemingly unaffected. Surprisingly, traditional values seem to exist side by side with those effects not only in rural surroundings but even in large cities

Few would quarrel with science as a quest for truth. A claim that it is the only access to truth — a view which is held in some quarters — can lead to a denigration of other forms of human experience This rationalism or scientism engendered by a pseudo-scientific mentality is totally alien to the mystical experiences encountered in the East Zen Buddhism provides a direct contrast to the scientific method It does not believe in rational argumentation but in an irrational exchange of paradoxes which is supposed to lead finally to Enlightenment through intuition It is clear from the survey conducted by the author referred to earlier[4] that many scientists find it difficult to reconcile the practice of their discipline with their religions. This leads to a kind of compartmentalization in their lives.

Technology, in an attempt to make life easier and give us more leisure, has provided us with machines to do laborious and hum-

drum jobs Yet this process, which expects ever higher productivity, can result in our dehumanization and alienation Using the term, "machinalization" (as distinct from mechanisation) of society, Satosi Watanabe says "Man becomes like a small gear in a mechanical watch or a tiny diode in a seminconductor chip "[10] I venture to express a somewhat differing view The life of a rickshaw puller has certainly been ameliorated by the introduction of the cycle rickshaw and the auto-rickshaw in India The lot of the factory worker has also undoubtedly improved with the use of fork lifts to carry heavy loads and the employment of automatic machines to eliminate repetitive manual jobs With increasing profits arising from higher productivity, wages too have risen, contributing to a betterment of living standards in many Asian countries and spectacularly in the NICs like Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore Factors such as these are certainly conducive to a more human existence rather than to dehumanization

Technology has also radically changed patterns of communication Today telephone and television links via satellites have brought peoples of different countries much closer and developed international contacts This exposure to different cultures has brought about international solidarity, making the world a "global village " Common issues affecting humanity such as apartheid or the violation of human rights evoke sympathy from all over the world The Bhopal disaster in India, for example, caused a universal public outcry Asian countries are therefore no longer isolated from the West Yet these same modes of communication are also means of promoting consumerism Moreover, communication through electronic devices has reduced personal contacts, so vital in building human relationships Surveys have shown that watching television has considerably limited conversations within families, jeopardising family life The computer has reduced the person to a code number and curtailed privacy, all the most personal details of an individual becoming accessible at the mere push of a button On a more positive note once again, it must be recognized that the mass media, an effective means of communication, can also be a powerful instrument of education, especially in promoting literacy and disseminating positive values even in the remotest villages of Asia

Technology has quickened the tempo of modern life in Asia. The demands of higher productivity aided by the rapidity of transport and communications have put pressure on individuals to deliver goods and services at a faster rate Traditional methods of

10 Satosi WATANABE, "Disintegration of Values," *ibid*, pp 114-124

industrial production and cultivation have been abandoned. The human way of life which in the past found time for relaxation and meditation in characteristic Eastern fashion, has changed abruptly. It is particularly unfortunate that people now find little time for reading, especially the classics. Consequently, Hindu children who could in the past recite slokas from the Bhagavad Gita are now unfamiliar with the rich content of this book. The same is probably true of the sacred books and traditional writings of other religions. Caught in this whirlpool of "technological progress," peoples' lives are more unbalanced as less time is available for creative thinking Family life, too, has been affected· jobs have become more demanding, compelling not only those employed in airlines and shipping companies but even sales people and business executives to travel frequently and spend long periods away from home Even worse is the problem faced by those families whose breadwinner is forced to work in a foreign country to support them without being provided with family quarters

Yet, despite the rationalism occasioned by modern science, the dehumanizing influences of "machinalization," the de-personalism engendered by electronic communications and the pressures of modern life, Asian traditional cultures appear to have survived, co-existing as it were with the Western brand of technological culture This situation illustrated by the example of an Indian scientist working in the Research Department of a transnational company in Bombay When going to work he dons his shirt, trousers, tie, shoes and socks and participates in business life in typical Western fashion Back home with his family in the evening, he changes into his "kurta" and "lungi" and watches a programme of Indian classical music on television. Likewise, Prof Tomoaki Tsuchida has observed that the lack of a world view or indifference made Japanese scientists very comfortable. They could be relaxed in their traditional fashion of living and at the same time they could be very advanced scientists and technologists On a spiritual level, they do not experience a serious threat [7]

3. Consumerism versus Poverty

Technology is supposed to bring about an improvement in quality of life, providing basic material comforts and improving health care. Yet, as pointed out by Felix Wilfred,[2] it has led to the consumerism with a passion for luxury goods and extravagant comforts of the Asian middle class, in utter disregard for the squalor and poverty around them. Thus, while one-fifth of humanity

consists of car-drivers, junk-food eaters, small-shoppers and throw-away buyers, another one-fifth live in dire want. It is scandalous that while the world production of food is increasing, a whole population is dying of starvation in Ethiopia. A consumeristic attitude is incongruous in countries which, "under the influence of Buddha and many sages and saints, preached *karunâ* (compassion), *maitrî* (fellowship) and *dayâ* (sympathy), not to speak of the traditional values of renunciation characteristic of the Asian religio-cultural heritage."[10]

One of the commonest reproaches levelled against modern patterns of economic development is the uneven distribution of wealth. It is often pointed out that "economic and technological growth turns out to be oppressive and exploitative in favour of the few against the many" bringing in its wake "widespread inequality, poverty and unemployment, as well as indebtedness in relation to the advanced industrial nations."[11] While, undoubtedly, there is some degree of exploitation, it must nevertheless be admitted that there has been an amelioration of the standard of living in most countries of Asia. It has been spectacular in the NICs like Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore. Even in poorer countries like India, the population below the poverty line has fallen from 48.3% in 1977-78 to 37.4% in 1983-84[12] and still further since then.

What is incontrovertible, however, is that 23% of the human population which constitutes the richer countries enjoy a disproportionate share of the economic resources of the world. This unjust situation is further exacerbated by the protectionist policies of the richer countries of the North towards the poorer ones of the South, as stated in the Final Document of the International Seminar on "Poverty and the Environment" held in Assisi on October 23-25, 1991.[13] "The external debt and the subsidization and protectionist policies and incentives of major producers of agricultural commodities impede the equitable transfer of labour forces, the acquisition of development capital, and the just exchange of goods."

A question often debated is whether the type of Western technology adopted in the Third World countries is really effective in solving the problems of poverty. Is not the Gandhian concept of cottage industries more appropriate? Industrial development in Asia is criticized for becoming "increasingly oriented towards luxury

11 Saneh CHAMARIK, "Science and Technology for Modernization — an Asian View," *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Science, Technology and Spiritual Values*, Tokyo, 25-29 May 1987, pp. 199-206.

12 *India 1991. Observer Statistical Handbook*, p. 49.

13 "Poverty and the Environment", *VJTR*, 56/8 (Aug. 1992).

goods for elite consumption rather than meeting the minimum inexpensive needs of the masses."[14] It has also been faulted for catering to exports in order to earn foreign exchange instead of producing goods for domestic consumption. While there is certainly some validity in these allegations, the Indian experience of promoting small scale industry and curbing the growth of large so-called monopolistic companies has proved futile. So slow has the GDP growth been in the past few years that India was compelled to renounce this policy in 1991 in favour of larger corporations The optimum solution seems to be a co-existence of the large with the small where the large units mass produce commodities like plastic raw materials, for example, while creating smaller downstream units like small moulders which convert the raw materials into utilitarian consumer goods Another model which has been successful in India and presumably in more advanced countries as well is that of large engineering companies farming out the manufacture of components to smaller ancillary units But here, a word of caution is called for The Indian experience has revealed that small scale entrepreneurs tend to exploit labour since they are not governed by the labour laws applicable to larger factories, nor is it possible for the workers to form trade unions to fight for their rights because of the smallness of their numbers

4. Control of Nature versus Environmental Pollution

Science and technology have played an important role in controlling natural disasters like floods and epidemics, in canalising river waters to irrigate fields, in improving crop yields by newer scientific methods, in harnessing energy from rivers, tides, the wind and the sun at the service of the human family Technology has also been used to extract coal and petroleum from the earth as sources of energy and to mine other ores and minerals to build houses and fabricate machinery. There can be little doubt that these applications of technology have been of immense benefit to humankind

Why then is technology so harshly condemned? Because, to be economically viable it often demands mass production which exploits natural resources at a tremendous rate. In the case of non-renewable resources like coal and oil, future generations will have to pay the price of their wasteful consumption by the people of affluent countries driving luxurious limousines. Even in the case

14. J MASCURITA, "The Catholic University Confronting the Ethical Problems of our Technological Society" Regional Document (India) for the Meeting of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (Dec. 1978).

of renewable resources like forests, the rate at which they are being destroyed is higher than that at which they are restored, resulting not only in their steady depletion, but in indirect effects like rising sea levels, desertification, soil erosion and the increased frequency of droughts, floods and tropical storms "The prospect of tidal waves of environmental refugees driven from their homelands (by these catastrophes) is increasing the possibility that a vicious circle be created of greater imbalances in the relationship poverty environment"[14]

The chemical industry has been, and unfortunately still is in many developing countries, a major source of environmental pollution Apart from the Bhopal disaster and other accidental occurences like the spillage of chemicals from Swiss chemical factories into the Rhine river, which are too well known to merit repetition other insidious forms of pollution are far more common A typical example

A study conducted on a 10 km stretch of the Kalu River near Bombay which receives effluents from a rayon factory, a paper mill, a dye factory and a chemical plant contains various effluents like heavy metals chlorides dyes and organic acids The accumulation of inorganic insoluble mercury at the river bed led to the proliferation of bacteria which convert it to methyl mercury It has entered the food chain via fish and cows which graze on the grass growing along the banks Symptoms similar to the Minamata disease observed in Japan have already made their appearance in inhabitants of the surrounding area

Discharge of toxic vapours and occasional leakages of even more toxic gas into the atmosphere poses a serious health hazard to populations living in the vicinity of chemical plants

Nuclear radiation is of course one of the worst forms of pollution as exemplified by the tragedies caused deliberately in Hiroshima and accidentally at Chernobyl Other accidental leaks of radioactive material from nuclear power plants are not so well documented but are nonetheless serious causes of cancer and other diseases

The increasing use of pesticides, often indiscriminate, while protecting crops from the ravages of pests, has led to slow poisoning of some people applying these products and of others consuming the fruits grains and vegetables contaminated with such chemicals Some, like the chlorinated hydrocarbons, accumulate in the human body, ultimately resulting in death

15 Report submitted at the Conference on "Hazardous Wastes," Honolulu, Hawaii (USA) Nov 11 14 1990 by the Dept of Life Sciences, St Xavier's College, Bombay

The international conference at Rio highlighted the problems caused by exhaust emissions of automobiles and by fluorocarbons used as refrigerants and in aerosols These products of industrial civilisation can engender irreversible changes in the global climate by the so-called "greenhouse effect" and can cause a radical redistribution of moisture, causing drastic temperature changes and inundation of coastal areas

What is often little realized is that people themselves can be a source of pollution Thus, an increasing population brought about by a decreasing mortality rate (the effect of better health care resulting from scientific research and technological development[1]) and the further influx of people into the already densely populated industrial cities produces domestic pollution It has been estimated that in Greater Bombay the emission of domestic pollutants has increased from 34 02 tonnes/day in 1973 to 53 58 tonnes/day in 1986 and that 78% of the pollution load in water emanates from domestic sources [15]

The whole of nature is so inter-related that any disruption at one point can have unpredictable repercussions at another Hence there is "a growing scientific interest in the linkage of biology, chemistry, physics, meteorology, economics and geophysics to decipher food-climate-population-energy puzzles "[16] Quoting Lewis Thomas, Harlan Cleveland points out that the earth might be thought of as an "immense organism" where

> chemical signals might serve the function of global hormones, keeping balance and symmetry in the operation of various inter-related working parts, informing tissues in the vegetation of the Alps about the state of eels in the Sargasso Sea, by long interminable relays of interconnected messages between all kinds of other creatures

Taking advantage of these inter-connections, countries like the USA which produce huge quantities of carbon dioxide with their gasoline-guzzling vehicles have proposed at Rio that developing countries grow more forests to re-convert carbon dioxide into oxygen and thus counteract the greenhouse effect Who pays?

It is alleged that the industrially advanced countries use Third World countries as dumping grounds for wastes that cannot easily be incinerated or otherwise disposed of They have also been accused of abandoning polluting industries, transferring the "dirty" technologies to poorer nations in need of earning foreign exchange There is some truth in these accusations. A typical example is that of the dyestuffs industry. Many companies in Europe have closed

16 Harlan CLEVELAND, Paper presented at Symposium of the World Academy of Art and Science, Lisbon, Portugal, May 11, 1982

down some of their manufacturing facilities, preferring to buy dyestuffs from countries like China to avoid expenditure on pollution control.

Nevertheless, it is unfair to make a blanket condemnation of the West in this respect because there is on the part of many multinational organisations a genuine concern for the environment not only in their country of origin but even in the host country in which they operate. Some have stricter safety and pollution standards than the local governments. Some refuse to buy intermediate or finished products from companies that do not employ stringent environmental protection measures. Some, like Ciba-Geigy, have small teams to assist their customers in maintaining good housekeeping, ensuring that no avoidable waste is produced and recommending methods of effluent treatment and control.[17]

II. The Technological Backlash

Despite the hitherto unimaginable progress of science and technology and their powerful impact on contemporary culture in East and West, "the mood of modern society no longer supports the uncritical translation of scientific insights into social dogmas." Harland Cleveland summarizes the forms of the technological backlash thus:

> It has penetrated party politics (the "Greens"), business (baby formula, auto safety, smoking), public policy (clean water, acid rain, smog, aircraft noise), and international relations (arms control, agreements to restrain pollution and promote aircraft safety) Thinkers in developing countries have been talking (though governments aren't doing much) about alternative modes of development that would not require the waste and unfairness which seem, in industrial society, to be the handmaiden of progress

The result is often a more balanced outlook. At times, however, the reaction is so strong that it tends to bring about a negative result. It is worthwhile to analyse some of these trends with a view to formulating some basic principles of education to enable us to live more in harmony with our fellow beings and with nature.

1. Religion

Science has undoubtedly dispelled superstition to a large extent. It has also rendered meaningless certain anthropomorphic concepts of God. It would appear, however, that the agnosticism witnessed earlier is giving place to an interest in mysticism for

17 "Environmental Partnership," Ciba-Geigy Journal, 2/92, p 23

which Eastern religions are renowned. Yogic and Zen meditation are attracting new adherents as people get disillusioned with the glamour of materialism. This new interest, though as yet very limited, offers hope for the future.

As pointed out by Felix Wilfred,[2] we are no longer impressed by the "macroreligiosity identified with huge institutions, power and wealth. There is a search for salvation in the small, in the neglected and the despised." Religion is less esteemed for its dogmatic teachings than for its respect for human dignity and its witness to the gospel message of love, as in the work of Mother Teresa, for example. For this reason, there appears to be a growin revulsion for macro-religious institutions and an increasing participation in small basic communities and in religious sects.

2. Culture

It was earlier pointed out that the introduction of Western science and technology brought with it a Western outlook and Western style of life in some, but a kind of co-existence of East and West without a real integration in others. Neither of these is desirable, the former leading to a loss of positive traditional values, the latter to a kind a dualism in people's lives.

Today there is a greater appreciation of one another's culture, thanks to improved communication and particularly to the international television network. While a real synthesis of cultures is still a far cry, some genuine attempts at inculturation are takin place. Christian churches are incorporating styles of worship drawn from local cultures, use local architectural forms in the construction of places of worship, adopt local languages and traditional symbols in evangelisation. A greater appreciation of Eastern thought patterns is also taking place, providing for an enrichment and evolution of theology and philosophy. Born in Latin America, Liberation Theology is finding its own expressions in Asia.

The phenomenal success of Japan in industrialisation and economic progress has focused attention on the Japanese model of management. Books like *The Art of Japanese Management* have become extremely popular in Management Schools in various countries. Some multinational corporations profess to encourage the promotion of local traditions in their management style. Unfortunately, this often consists in just the adoption of external customs like "pujas" (ritual observances) to celebrate inaugurations or special festivals.

Instead of attempting a synthesis which involves the incorporation of good and noble values from other cultures into one's own, there is sometimes a negative and even hostile reaction to all that is foreign. This takes the form of an antipathy towards transnational corporations or the assertion of the superiority of one's own culture, shunning all that is foreign. It has been reported, for example, that in Thailand more peasants are using traditional methods of agriculture, refusing chemical fertilizer and machinery. "They may be poor," says Sulak Sivaraksa,[18] "but no longer in debt, so ploughing and harvesting may become a time of joy and real participation once again." One wonders whether one could not still preserve the time of joy and real participation even while using more modern methods of cultivation to improve yields and thus mitigate the hunger of millions of people.

3. Consumerism

Despite the growing realization that consumerism is a cause of pollution and at least indirectly responsible for the widespread poverty witnessed all over the world, little is being done to control it. There is a fear that a cutback in production will only bring about or accentuate recession. The high-power marketing strategies developed by both national and international firms cannot be curtailed. In fact, the powerful lobbies they have with governments hinder effective civic legislation to check them.

Nevertheless in a few fringe areas at least, some action has been taken

— In some countries, renewable resources like forests are protected by legislation which has resulted in a lower production of timber products

— Marginal cutbacks in oil consumption have been achieved by controlling the circulation of cars and minimizing excessive heating in winter

— Smoking has been prohibited in many public places and aids developed to control addiction to this habit

Much more needs to be done in this area.

4. Ecology

It is certainly in this area that the technological backlash has scored the most significant gains as more and more people are being conscientized of the problems of pollution. Today, more than

18. Sulak Sivaraksa, "Past and Present Trends of Modernisation," *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Science, Technology and Spiritual Values*, Tokyo, 25-29 May 1987, pp. 191-198.

ever before, the path of development being pursued is one which satisfies the needs of the present generation without jeopardising those of future generations. Businesses are espousing the cause of Sustainable Development which aims at giving "equal weight to the ecologically desirable, the technically feasible and the economically affordable."[19]

— No longer can industry pollute the environment with impunity. Norms are laid down in many countries of the world — even in Asia — of maximum permissible limits of pollutant concentrations in the atmosphere, in liquid effluents discharged into rivers, lakes and seas, and in solid wastes used for land-fill.

— Polluting materials are being replaced by newer environment-friendly products which are bio-degradable or which can be easily recycled. Thus recycled paper is commonly used today and special technologies have been developed to recycle plastics.

— Fluorocarbons, used in aerosols and as refrigerants, which destroy the ozone layer of the atmosphere, are being phased out. It is heartening to note that the date for their total ban has even been preponed

— Catalysts are increasingly being used in automobiles to control the contamination of the atmosphere by their exhaust gases.

— Green peace is demanding a full ban on waste trade from developed to developing countries.

— Agencies, both national and international like the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), OSHA (Organisation for Safety and Health), FDA (Food and Drug Administration) are active in laying down maximum limits of permissible contamination in terms of chemical impurities, presence of bacteria, nuclear radiation, and pesticide residues in the air, in water and in foodstuffs and in monitoring these levels

Yet, despite these laudable moves to protect the environment, it must be admitted that in many developing countries, insufficient attention is paid to ecology because of insufficient awareness of the problem, lack of technical competence in this area, inadequate funds or sheer neglect or indifference.

(to be concluded)

19 Alex Krauer, "Sustainable Development — A Window of Opportunity for Progressive Companies," *Ciba-Geigy Journal*, 2/92, pp. 6-11.

VJTR 58 (1994) 48-51

Listen to the Spirit

"My Peace I Give to You" (Jn 14:27)

At the beginning of every year Christians all over the world keep the day of prayer for peace In India January 30th has been chosen in remembrance of Gandhiji who died in the cause of peace

When Jesus was born the angels of Bethlehem announced peace on earth Peace was Jesus parting gift to his disciples when he entrusted to them his own mission "Peace be with you ..As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20 10-21) Where is this gift of God today? More than ever we are in need of it, but the more we long for it in growing anguish, often despair, the more elusive it seems to be in our tortured world If we want to celebrate the day of prayer for peace as true Christians we must first reflect on what peace means in the Bible, in Jesus' message

When we turn to the gospels we may first be struck by Jesus' own warning· "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the world; I did not come to bring peace but the sword" (Mt 10.34) Jesus speaks of the division that, on his account, will run not only through nations but even through the close community of the family We may come closer to Jesus' real peace message if we listen to the special qualification added to the peace promise in the farewell discourse "Peace I give to you, my peace I give to you I do not give it to you as the world gives it" (Jn 14:27). This 'my peace', contrasted to the peace of the world, points at Jesus' own person and life as source and model of authentic peace.

What was peace in Jesus' own life? We love to think of Jesus' peaceful childhood in the rural setting of a Galilean village embedded in the soft hills around Mount Tabor, following the quiet rhythm of the seasons of sowing and harvesting, as reflected in his parables Yet, even Nazareth and the intimacy of the Holy Family show that peace in human life is not the same as the harmony of nature The account of Jesus' first journey to Jerusalem at the beginning of his adulthood reveals the first conflict: Jesus' life is totally embraced by his Father's love and will. His real home is not the earthly family to which he belongs but the Father's house. When the parents find him in the temple, Mary is pained and does not understand, but she keeps Jesus' words and a bewildering memory in her heart (Lk 2:51) and learns to accept his mission. Her own peace consists

in renouncing the claims of the mother and, step by step, realizing the implications of her total surrender to God as his handmaid.

Not all conflicts are resolved in God's peace. Jesus' public ministry again begins in an atmosphere of peace. He proclaims God's reign which in prophetic vision is a reign of peace, where people will beat their swords into ploughshares (Is 2:4). The key word of his proclamation is 'Blessed', addressed to all who are waiting for a better world of justice and peace. But in Luke's account the beatitudes are matched by the fourfold 'woe' for those who do not need salvation: they have already what they expect from life — wealth, fulfillment, pleasure, social acceptance and status among the people (Lk 6:20-26). Their lives seem no longer dependent on God. They have built their own world and are well entrenched in their positions.

The reign of God as proclaimed by Jesus becomes a threat to the leaders of the people: the Sadducees feel attacked in their political and economic dominance; the scholars, who rely on their knowledge of tradition and law, cannot reconcile themselves to Jesus' freedom which knows of only one ultimate commandment, the love of God and neighbour; the Pharisees, respected for their sincere observance of the Torah and the traditions, cannot accept the message that God's love and mercy are the core of the covenant, that saints and sinners are equally welcome in God's Kingdom, and that there should be "more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent" (Lk 15:7). The genuine sincerity and earnestness of many religious leaders cannot be questioned. Still, their vision had lost the focus: they saw in the covenant the divine guarantee of their own superior status, power, social excellence, religious superiority. Jesus leads the people back to the core of their vocation: to be God's people. God alone is Lord, his throne is high above heaven and earth.

So the Gospels show us Jesus surrounded by conflict, finally destroyed by his adversaries. He does not offer the peace as the world gives it, but his own peace. If as Christians we wait and work for peace today, we must understand anew what his peace implies. Pope John XXIII, who realized that we are at the dawn of a new era in the history of our human family, gave us his last Encyclical less than two months before his death: *Pacem in terris* — "Peace on Earth." It was written at the time of the explosive tension between East and West and became like the testament of this Pope so full of truly human understanding of our world and of spiritual vision. We need peace in human relations, peace in public life, peace between nations, peace which would make the whole world a human family. What is needed for such peace?

It is obvious that "scientific competence, technical capacity and professional experience are necessary," yet, he continues, "by themselves they are not sufficient to elevate the relationships of society to an order whose driving force is love and whose method of achievement is freedom" (n.163). These are the marks of the peace proclaimed by Jesus, to be realized by us in our world.

Its foundation is truth: we all know that truthfulness in speech and writing are indispensable for genuine human relations. Lies, calumnies, distortions, destroy community at every level. But in Jesus' message, in Christian language, truth means more than truthfulness and honesty, it comprises the full reality of human life, the earthly realities and our ultimate rootedness in God. Unless it has its foundation in this twofold truth, peace is deceptive. People can live peacefully in happy ignorance of the painful reality of their surroundings provided their own daily needs are satisfied, unaware of the sufferings of others, and of the injustice and degradation by which they are humiliated. Entire nations can become blind to exploiting economic relations which keep millions of people in unworthy dependence and poverty. Such blindness can come from simple ignorance, but also from the fear of being disturbed and challenged to renounce one's privileges. In the political sphere such blindness may be dictated by the need of conforming to the ruling class in order to cling to positions of influence

We do need open eyes and honest assessments of social realities, but to find real peace we need still more human life has its roots in the divine order. The inviolable rights, the dignity of the human person, are not negotiable with pragmatic conventions left to arbitrary manipulation. The gross disorders in the political and economic realms reveal the decline of these basic orientations. Money and power politics become increasingly the controlling factors in our world In the same encyclical Pope John XXIII asks why there is so little truly Christian spirit in public life in spite of the great number of good Christians in high positions — he asks this, of course, mainly in the context of the Western world, but his answer is relevant also for us He points at the lack of Christian education which limps far behind the secular standards of our world. Besides, it is not only a question of the degree of formation but also of its orientation. Is our Christian education truly all-roundly human or onesidedly oriented to the Church life and individual morality? True Christian education comprises the whole human life and includes the social and political duties of every citizen A responsible orientation towards modern society and involvement in its needs must characterize every Christian institution. This must be given not only to Christian students but to all

Only on the foundation of truth can justice grow, the "measure and objective of peace." Truth-based justice is aware of the rights and duties of all concerned, not only of one's own claims The capacity to form a balanced and fair assessment in conflict situations is the mark of true human maturity. We must also learn to place good personal relations above mere material profits. Only people who have trained themselves to be fair in relations to their neighbour can outgrow the collective prejudices and antagonisms of their communities — ethnic, social, economic — as is necessary in every nation.

This is necessary today, on an even wider scope, in international relations. Justice aims at the common good of all. Given the intertwined relations of all nations today, the scope of the "common good" can no

longer be confined to the national welfare but encompasses the whole globe. Peace can come to our world only if all nations obtain their legitimate share in the goods of the earth. We need a new world order. Already John XXIII saw the need of an authority "capable of bringing to realisation the new meaning which 'common good' is taking on in the historical evolution of the human family" (n.145).

Such a goal seems to be beyond human reach. The only driving force capable of earnestly and consistently moving towards this goal is love. Love must be understood in its full Christian meaning: God himself becomes the uniting bond of the human family, not by imposing laws but by his indwelling in human hearts and opening them to fellowship and communion with all. This may perhaps sound too supernatural and unrealistic, but it is not: God's presence in the human heart and his guidance of human life does not alienate us from earthly realities but gives us an orientation. People of mature life are in touch with that inner sphere of awareness which is not directed by instinctive impulses and reactions, is not even determined by mere practical reasoning, but makes us realize what, in a given situation, is right and wrong. This higher awareness breaks through the vicious circle of individual and collective interests and opens the mind to the breadth of the human family and the harmony which is rooted in God himself, in our origin and destiny. Only in this universal love we find our true self. This awareness must be fostered in religious education and spiritual formation. Through it God guides us in life and work. If we follow it our decisions will not be based on pragmatic calculations. God's wisdom guides us and we become peace-makers.

Finally, peace must be realized in freedom. In the tragic experiences of recent history we have seen how a peace imposed by totalitarian systems was shattered, and liberation turned out to be worse than domination. Peace must grow from within, it cannot be imposed. It has its roots in God and is written within our human hearts as painful longing, but also as a challenging task. It can be realized only in God's grace and in solidarity with the entire human family. The groping peace-process between Israel and PLO is not only a political event in the Middle East but the deep concern of the whole world: we greet it as a tiny, vulnerable flower of a better world suddenly opening its petals on the stony soil of our earth in the polluted atmosphere of the modern world. With Pope John we pray that "God may banish from the hearts of people whatever may endanger peace. May He transform them into witnesses of truth, justice and brotherly love. May He enlighten the rulers of peoples so that, in addition to the solicitude for the proper welfare of citizens, they may guarantee and defend the great gift of peace" (n.194).

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Notes

Bless me Father ...

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph 1:3) Blessing is one of the most characteristic words in the Bible. The creation account climaxes in God's blessing to the first human couple (Gen 1.28) and the Apocalypse ends by proclaiming blessed those who have washed their robes clean and have the right to the tree of life (Rev 22:14). From the beginning to the end of time God's plan of salvation is "an immense divine blessing" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no 1079).

That human beings respond to this "shower of blessings" by themselves blessing God is a daring idea that enters the Bible possible under the influence of older tradition For it is Melchisedek, the *pujari* of El-Elyon in the shrine of Salem, who is first said to pronounce, "Blessed be God the Most High who has delivered your enemies into your hands!" The double movement of blessing, from above and from below, is fully part of the religion of Israel and of the New Testament It is the way also in which the new Catechism introduces the theme of the liturgy and the sacraments, both explained in this double movement of blessing

Blessing is also part of popular devotion Father, bless my child ... Come and bless my house , Bless me Father for I have sinned , Bless this medal, this machine, the work of mine Deacons and priests are the normal ministers of blessing Do we realise what we do? Do we see our blessing in a sacramental context as the new Catechism does?[1]

Indian religions also affirm the importance of blessing In fact, according to the analysis of the late Fr R Antoine, one of the most characteristic features of the Indian epics is the importance given to the *word*, the word of blessing, of promise or of curse [2] The word is endowed with a power to shape the course of history This is at least how our ancestors perceived it The word, whether a "bene-diction" (blessing) or "male-diction" (curse) has power

In our culture where the word has been cheapened by politics and publicity, we are apprehensive of giving any magical power to the word Priests may even be reluctant to bless the people. And yet the word uttered in faith shares the efficacy of the divine Word Blessing is not futile This is what the liturgy teaches us. This is what people believe This is the truth

The Church of Bengal has been blessed by a recent publication of three volumes for the ritual of blessing,[3] thanks to a prolonged labour of

1 Cf Philip Rouillard, O.S.B., "Une Immense Bénédiction Divine" in *Esprit et vie* 103/34-35 (26 August-2 Sept 1993), pp 465-70

2 See "The Power of Word" in *Rama and the Bards. Epic Memory in the Ramayana*. Calcutta: A Writers' Workshop, 1975, pp 77-92.

3. *Ashirbad Grantha* (Book of Blessings in Bengali). Calcutta. Kristapuja Prakashani, 1991 3 volumes, pp. 398, 308 and 416. Rs 150 a set.

J. Englebert and his team. The three volumes are not a translation of the Roman Ritual nor of its English version published from Bangalore not so long ago. They are a new creation in Indian liturgy. They are published with an eye for practical use. Each blessing is a celebration consisting of singing, readings, praying and the ritual action involving the community. The text of this Ritual is in Bengali, but the introductions and rubrics are in English (the rubrics naturally in red!), except for the blessings for domestic use (I, 127-93) in which the rubrics are in Bengali, as they are mostly to be used by parents on various occasions of the life of the children — birthdays, annaprashana ceremony, school leaving, home leaving for school or studies, etc.

The table of contents is given on opposite pages in English and Bengali, and the annexes 2-7 (pp 31-90) are repeated in each volume as they contain additional songs for the celebrations, specially from Tagore, some common prayers; readings from other Scripture for a Diwali celebration; the various ministers for different blessings (bishops, priests, deacons, appointed lay people, parents .), and three Indexes The first volume contains 50 blessings directly pertaining to persons for different occasions families, children, birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, elderly people, sick people, travellers, engagement, pregnancy .. The second volume has 40 blessings connected with human activity new buildings, schools, libraries, places of work, sport centres, animals, forests, first fruits, tubewells, the sea, rivers, etc The third volume has blessings of objects used in liturgy of in popular devotions· crosses, statues, bread, water, fruits, diwali lamps, prasad, The work is based on a spirituality of creation and has a strong catechetical value. It can be used in rural settings no less than in urban situations If used judiciously and with a freedom of spirit, it can help tone up the spiritual life of our communities Fr Englebert (76, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai Rd , Calcutta 700 016) offers to provide 'retroversions' of the texts in English if anybody wants to use this rich material for publications in other Indian languages. The publication is really a blessing for the whole Church in South Asia.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Reflection on Doing Theology in Malaysia

As an Asian Christian, I have been searching for a meaningful way of doing theology in the pluricultural society in Malaysia where Christian form only about 8% of a total of 18 million population. With five years of pastoral involvement in Kuala Lumpur, I was able to arrive at a certain understanding of how to present the Christian faith to our people.

To begin with, we need a hermeneutical method that is not a translation and transplantation of Western theology to our context The method is best described as a spiral-fountain movement. It constantly moves forward and returns to the pool of human experience, and thus heightens the commitment of our people of God, Jesus, the Spirit, our neighbour and

culture, with an anthropological focus on the culture of our people; (b) it calls for critical discernment as active listeners and committed doers of God's Word; (c) it presupposes that God is already all in all in world history; (d) it leads to a liberational struggle for justice and solidarity for all peoples, especially the marginal people in Malaysia

(a) An Anthropological focus

If at all our Christian faith is to have greater relevance to our people, our theological reflection must not begin by defining and explaining some selected relevant theological concepts and meaning It must focus on the anthropological and contextual experiences of our people In other words, due attention has to be given to the cultural resources of our people

Malaysians from different walks of life, we almost always take off our shoes at the main entrance and walk barefoot in our houses and sacred places of worship The action is symbolic of our respect for peoples and deities, and helps maintaining a clean environment inside the house and sacred place It is also symbolic of the oppression and poverty of our marginal people, especially the indigenous population of about 50, 000 people As Malaysians sharing in the commonality of humanity with the marginal people, symbolized in the removal of our shoes, it would be impossible for committed believers to remain deaf to their cries for justice

(b) A critical attitude of discernment

Our hermeneutical method challenges Malaysian hearers and doers of God's word to exercise a critical discernment as we interact with the biblical texts Each believer is an embodiment of our people's aspirations. Each person acts as a living context for God's word to be sown God speaks a new word, giving a fresh meaning to life in the contemporary situation of Malaysia For Elsa Tamez,

> it is this experience in the end, that will facilitate the distancing of oneself from the all-too-familiar interpretation of the common presuppositions in the texts, and will help to uncover keys to a liberation-oriented reading This is the process of coming closer to daily life which implies the experiences of pain, joy, hope hunger celebration and struggle [1]

Between the context of the biblical text and the current context of Malaysia, there occurred what Clodovis Boff called a "correspondence of relationship "[2] The biblical context has a corresponding relationship with our Malaysian context The same text of Exodus and other related texts gave a new meaning to our history as a people God has spoken those liberating words anew God is beckoning the Church and all Malaysians (our common vocation) who take off our shoes and walk barefoot and to respond to God like Moses. God is calling us to step forward and go (commitment as a faith response) on a mission to liberate ourselves and all marginal people from every oppressive structure in the country We are to build a just society of equals as we become more developed and

1. Elsa TAMEZ, "Women's Rereading of the Bible," in *Voices from the Margin*, edited by R.S. SUGIRTHARAJAH, New York. Orbis Books, p.26-7

2. Clodovis BOFF, "Hermeneutics: Constitution of Theological Pertinency," in *Voices from the Margin*, p. 27ff

affluent as a nation.

(c) God is all in all

A contextualized theology underlines the reality that God is not the sole monopoly of Christianity While the Hebrew God is particularized in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, God always remains the God of creation and history Discerners of God's will often experience "a kind of mystic intuition,"[3] in which the communication of God leads the seeker to a deeper conviction of God's universality. It is truly an experience of our profound communion with God and with fellow citizens. It tantamounts to Paul's insightful experience that God is all in all (1 Cor 15:28), of all, over all, through all and within all (Eph 4·6). No doubt this insight presupposes the incarnational moment when Jesus historically identified with humankind and creation But now the same Jesus has already eschatologically subjected all of cretion and humankind to God

By virtue of our human communality, the Malaysian humanity has also been eschatologically subjected to God. Indeed God is already all in all in creation, but also in my fellow Malaysians, irrespective of our ethnic, religious, cultural and ideological differences. The biblical discourses on who is my neighbour (Lk 10 29-37) informs us that all Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and other believers are as much our neigbours as the Christians Henceforth, we all belong to one humankind, with God over all, through all and all in all

In this way, our cultural practice has a theological significance too. Over and above a common cultural practice, there is a realization that the God of creation and history is the condition for the possibility for all Malaysians to identify more closely with one another We are in a fraternal communion Unity and harmony are the coherent values of our social foundation Our personal and communal vocation is to build our nation together Nation-building is our common responsibility We need to bring about a society where our people experience more fully God's "all-in-allness," not only in our present history and culture but more so in the years oriented toward the realization of Vision 2020[4]

(d) Liberational Struggle for justice and solidarity

For our faith to be more relevant to ourselves and credible to our people of other faiths, our actions need to show our relationship with God In other words, with critical discernment we must translate our faith into an active liberational struggle for justice and solidarity on behalf of the marginal people in Malaysia. This struggle needs to be both a liberational practice and a spirituality. We have to follow Jesus faithfully in our history and actualize the spirit of Jesus in our own times[5] For instance, the

3 Stanley J Samartha, "The Asian Context: Sources and Trends," in *Voices from the Margin*, p. 42.

4. It is a vision proposed by our Prime Minister in a paper he presented to the Malaysian Business Council on December 12, 1991. In that paper entitled "Malaysia: The Way Forward," he proposed that Malaysia envisaged herself to be a fully developed nation by the year 2020.

5. Sobrino stated that theology consists of practice which is the following of Jesus in o· tory and spirituality the actua tion of the Spirit of Jesus in our own times. See

structural imbalance in the distribution of power and wealth in Malaysia challenges us to struggle for an integral liberation of our hearts and our society from all forms of egoism and all oppressive structures. Our struggle aims at this, that the more we develop our nation, the more distributive and social justice be meted out to the marginal people

We need to go a step further in the promotion of solidarity among our people as we are still victims of the existing racial distrust and religious polarization. Instead of perceiving the other as a potential threat, solidarity enables us to encounter the other, whether of a different race or religion, as a fellow human being and believer, sharing in a common history and humanity Solidarity also demands that each Malaysian becomes further committed to the promotion of "the good of all and of each individual, because we are really responsible for all "[6] This becomes more pertinent as we become more affluent and developed Instead of allowing economic disparity to widen the rift between our people, we need the political will to promote the solidarity of all the races in the country

In this sense, the struggle for solidarity presupposes the presence of justice in our society But it goes beyond justice by including generosity and concern for the others, and involving total selflessness, forgiveness and a reconciliation' that will bind the old wounds of racial riots suffered by our people With an increasing sense of racial and religious solidarity, our nation will enjoy a more lasting peace than in the recent past

The ongoing search for a relevant hermeneutical method for doing inculturated theology remains an urgent task for the Christian churches in Malaysia If our faith is to have any relevance in a multicultural society, our emergent theology needs to repossess the cultural richness of the existing anthropological resources We have to exercise a critical discernment if we are to encounter the God who always addresses us where we are as a people in our nation Furthermore, we need to presuppose that through the paschal event, God is already all in all of our history Yet the fullness of God's reign depends on how we follow Jesus and actualize his liberating Spirit in the struggle for greater justice in Malaysia

Jojo M. FUNG, S.J.

Spirituality of Liberation Toward Political Holiness New York. Orbis Books, 1988, p x

6. JOHN PAUL II "Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, no 38", in *Catholic Social Thought The Documentary Heritage* ed David J O BRIAN and Thomas A SHANNON, New York. Orbis Books, 1992, p 421

7 Donal DORR, *Option for the Poor A Hundred Years of Catholic Social Teaching* New York. Orbis Books, 1992, p.329 Also confer JOHN PAUL II, "Sollicitudo Rei Socialis no.39," in *Catholic Social Thought The Documentary Heritage*, p 422.

Correction

In the November 1993 issue, p 652, Dr Felix Wilfred was erroneusly introduced as Head of the Department of Christian Studies in the University of Madras. The Head is Dr Thomas George Dr Wilfred is a Professor in the Department. We apologize to Dr George, Dr Wilfred and our readers for the mistake.

Book Reviews

Spirituality

What God Wants. Frank Wallace's Guide to Finding God's Love. By Frank WALLACE, S.J. Newtown E.J Dwyer (Suite 3, 32-72 Alice Street, Newtown NSW 2042, Australia) 1993 Pp x-102 A $14 95/£7 99 ISBN 0-85574-301-8

This book was conceived and was partially written (chs 1-4/5) before Wallace learnt he had cancer (16th December1992) He completed the book and died on 5th March 1993 The book is a fine testimony to a man whom I knew as a school boy The substance of the book originates from Frank Wallace's personal life and his years of experience in marriage encounter, retreat work, the healing ministry, and of friendships He sums up the goal in these words "I decided to write this book because I wanted to free people from the fear of God My specific topic was 'searching for the will of God', but I was not much at home with that phrase itself Ultimately, I believe that when we have been purified and discover what our own heart really wants, we have discovered what God really wants. Then we have the union of will which we call love" (p 90)

In many ways this is a practical guide to discuss where is God calling me now in my life and how to make decisions which are deeply faith decisions The discernment teaching of Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises forms the background and provides the context for chs 6-10 However, the author explains the process (First/Second/Third Time) from his own experience as a director of others. The treatment of the two sets of Ignatius' Rules for Discernment and Consolation-Desolation is related in an insightful way to the common game of snakes and ladders. Many readers will be helped by the reflections preceeding the actual exposition of the discernment process. The headings of the short chapters reveal the content: God's will — threat or challenge?; What am I Seeking?, Who is My God? and, Free to Discern? These spell out the preconditions for the possibility of Christian decision making

I found the following reflections valuable· the Christian instinct, types of tranquillity,the reasoning heart, our operational 'idea' of God, the Second Way to discern, the place of feelings and the awareness of the conditioned character of some Ignatian terminology making it problamatic today.

A major feature of the guide are the exercises which accompany every chapter and which throw much light on the prior text and enable the reader to personalize, integrate and gain insights into this major area in living a vibrant Christian life

I would have liked to have seen a more explicit discussion on the development of the Christian instinct, the role of the contemplation of Jesus Christ and an explicit clarification that the 'will of God' is not a preexisting blueprint to which I must conform. The social dimensions of all Christian living need explicit mention

The tribute to Frank Wallace by a friend and his own autobiographical notes, especially at the end, about his journey from being the responsible hardworking headmaster and sports coach I knew as a boy, to the warm, flexible and vulnerable guide and friend of many adds a fine dimension to a valuable book. It will surely be appreciated as much as his *Encounter Not Performance* (VJTR 56[1992] 287) which has been twice reprinted

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

useful introduction to the structures of the lectionary, careful exegesis of the text and a consistant feminist perspective in the hermeneutical exposition which I found challenging. This reminds us that only two booklets are written by women and Maloney's explicit emphasis reminds us that we need to remember this perspective in all the booklets.

Though rather expensive for Indian readers, good pastoral/diocesan libraries ought to have the set as eight booklet's for each year — A.B.C. — as these are good homiletic guides and educative from the perspective of biblical exegesis and exposition.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

The Skilled Pastor. Counselling as the Practice of Theology. By Charles W. TAYLOR. Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress. 1991. Pp. xiii 144. ISBN 0-8006-2509-9.

This is pastoral psychology presented in an outstanding manner.

A rich experience in the subject helps the author explore various nuances of pastoral counselling systematically and interestingly. The techniques of pastoral care and counselling are presented in in two parts. Part One deals with *Presence* and Part Two '*Interventions*'. *Presence* envisages the acquired qualities of the pastor in helping the parishioner which involves attending, responding and assessing. Attending requires the three skills of positioning, observing and listening in which the pastor might encounter problems like Distractions, Evaluations and Differences. Responding demands paraphrasing and probing, whereas Assessing calls for summarizing, hunching and eliciting. In Part Two *Interventions* are classified as Theological Assessment, Proclamation, Resources for Change and Guidance. In Theological Assessment which is "the art of thinking theologically about the beliefs that undergird a parishioner's feelings and actions." the author makes effective use of Albert Ellis' rational-emotive therapy which employs the important formulations of the ABC Theory (A = activating experience, B = belief about that experience, and C = consequences that occur emotionally and behaviourally), the irrational beliefs which cause the rejection of the reality of situations and remain fixated in undesirable emotions like anxiety, guilt and anger, and finally disputation and effect, i.e., disputing and challenging the parishioner's irrational beliefs and bringing about a desirable change in his/her beliefs and behaviour.

In the introductory chapter the author defines the various terminologies used in the book including the Metanoia Model of pastoral guidance. It is an integrated whole which includes Helping Skills, Theological Assessment and Religious Resources. This model is further developed in the last chapter.

This book will prove to be more than a guide for both lay and ordained persons in their efforts to be skillful pastors. Various pastoral skills are integrated into the Metanoia Model and the Problem-Solving or Problem-Management model. The book highlights the need for pastors to have an appropriate understanding of the good news and also the zeal for sharing it with the parishioners. Although the focus is on the pastor's skills, the real counsellor is perceived to be the Holy Spirit who teaches parishioners directly. Therefore, pastors with 'helping skills' only help parishioners hear and follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The pastoral conversations and exercises facilitate mutual listening to the Spirit.

Francis PERUMALIL, S.J.

In The Shadow Of Your Wings. Celebrating the Sacrament of Anointing. A Twelve-month Service Booklet. By Michael HANSEN, S.J. Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1993. Pp 38. N.p. ISBN 1-86371-266-6.

When in Australia recently I was

asked to celebrate the Sacrament of Anointing in a hospital with about fifty people. In India I do not know whether many parishes have a regular Eucharist with the Sacrament of Anointing. I was deeply impressed by the celebration which happens each month.

This small book provides a guide to pastors. The order of the service is 1 Introductory Rites, 2 Liturgy of the Word; 3 Liturgy of Anointing; 4 Liturgy of Eucharist, 5 Concluding Rites The liturgy of the Word is the most extensive section in the booklet with two readings and a psalm suggested for each month of the year The liturgy of Anointing is based on the rite in the Roman Ritual There are special intercession suggested when the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Eucharistic prayers are used Pastors who wish to minister more regularly to the sick, not just the dying, but the many in parishes who are sick in various ways may be pleased to have a useful guide

Paddy MEAGHER, S J

The Land of Walking Trees Meditations for the Seriously Ill By Michael HANSEN S J Melbourne Collins Dove, 1993 Pp 194 NP ISBN 0-86371-210-0

Michael Hansen has the chronic fatigue syndrome, and so is chronically sick. This book is a record of his journey, an inner journey as he found God in his sickness. The title comes from the narrative of the blind man in Mark 8 22-25 Those who are chronically ill are never really fully sick nor ever well and so they are in a type of no man's land

The book then is a diary of hope and the story of an inner journey which Michael shares with others who are seriously or chronically ill.

He has chosen his scripture texts from Luke's Gospel, a pilgrim's Gospel. In the Introduction he indicates three ways in which the book can be used. In each "method" he relies heavily on Ignatius' suggestions on contemplation, using the imagination, senses and memory applied to both the Gospels and to the reader's own life

There are twenty-five themes. Each theme is developed with a text from Luke, honest reflections by the reader (The Pilgrim) on the text and the theme, a reply by God/ Jesus equally honest, and finally a prayer The fact that all the text comes from Michael's own life and journey will mean that seriously sick persons will be able to resonate with his experiences His reflections and prayers will evoke personal reflections and prayers by the readers The book is to be dipped into and used according to the needs of the sick. For people who have never known chronic sickness the book will open up a world of experience unknown to them and may help them to be more sensitive especially to persons close to them who are chronically sick.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Theology

The Mystery of the Triune God. By John J O'DONNELL New York/ Mahwah Paulist Press, 1989 Pp viii-184 $ 8 95 ISBN 0-8091-3112-9

The Mystery of the Triune God is an excellent work on Trinitarian theology, dogma and various issues connected to the Trinity O'Donnell lays out a scientific and systematic presentation of a theology of the Trinity that responds to many a question from both the theistic and the atheistic quarters

The author has rich experience of years of teaching dogmatic theology at centres like the Heythrop College, the University of London, and the Gregorian University Therefore he combines the best of tradition and modern theology, and integrates them into a synthesis for the benefit of all who are searching for meaning in their faith in God

He explores diligently the Mystery of the Triune God from the perspective of the Roman Catholic tradition. The antinomies of theism and atheism are treated in detail in Chapter I Authors like Moltmann and Jungel are taken into

consideration, who regard both theism and atheism as "false attempts to think God." Both theism and atheism have a common link: both have the idea of God as "the perfect being, aloof from history, atemporal and impassible." While theism defends this concept of God, atheism rejects it. The Christian understanding of the experience of God is different: God identifies with humanity and this culminates in the suffering and death of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, for Christians, God and death are not contradictories. God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ is accomplished through his incarnation, cross, death and resurrection. Chapter II further explores this self-revelation of God which shows God in a new light: the Trinitarian nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is highlighted.

The Christian experience of God in the foundational experience of Jesus, in the New Testament narratives, in the paschal mystery, in his experience of Sonship and of the Spirit and the final trial of his Abba-experience in his crucifixion are all well-explored in Chapter III. The rest of the book deals with different aspects of Trinitarian theology. Special attention is given to the theology of the Holy Spirit, to the concept of Person and to the analogies of being and faith with a careful presentation of faith praxis: prayer, God and world in the Trinitarian context.

This will prove to be a precious resource book for teachers and students of theology and for all who are interested in the theology of the Trinity. It is a serious work that demands concentration and motivation from the reader. The less theologically educated person may find it difficult. Its merit lies in its synthetic treatment of the traditional and modern theology of the Trinity, especially from a Catholic perspective.

Francis PERUMALIL, S.J.

The Meaning of Life at the Edge of the Third Millenium. By Leonard Swidler, New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1992, Pp v-116. $8.95, ISBN 0-8091-3315-6

This book is an excellent attempt to present a comprehensive understanding of world religions in terms of their goals and relationship to humanity. The author explains major religious terms from the point of view of each religion. The presentation is comprehensive and dialogical. There are three striking features in this book. First of all, as the title of the book suggests, the author starts with the meaning of human life. All of us have an innate quest for meaning. This quest is collective and interrelated because we are social beings. This quest for meaning is universal. But each religion or ideology has a particular conception of the ultimate reality (p.29), and a specific goal to be achieved by human persons (p 12-17). Thus we have theistic and non-theistic religions (p.53), but all religions and ideologies aim at providing humans with the best possible way to live so as to attain the goal of life (p 53). In short, religion offers the ultimate meaning of life and facilitates human well-being.

Secondly, a whole chapter highlights the indispensability of dialogue and its positive contributions to the dialoguing parties. This book is a definite help towards a "culture of dialogue." The author also speaks of paradigm changes in our epistemology, which make dialogue a historical imperative (p.55). The "culture of dialogue" gains added significance in the context of growing religious fundamentalism and fanaticism. There is also an invitation to develop a "Global Ethos" (p 67) which calls for careful scrutiny, though the intention is good.

Finally, the author lists some specific contributions of Christianity to human well-being. In this section, the author's Christology is helpful. He has also taken up three central mysteries of Christianity which create difficulties for modern men/women and highlights dif-

ferent levels of meaning. The intention is to show the symbolized reality beyond the symbols themselves.

On the whole this book affirms the centrality of religion in human life. Religion, both as a meaning system and the way of life (p.7) enables humans to live "as authentically and wholly human as possible"(p.53). It is an excellent manual for those who are involved in inter-religious dialogue. The author offers us a wide range of footnotes for further reading

Thomas AMIRTHAM S.J.

Missionary Musings: A Search For Meaning. By R. NUBIOLA, S J Anand Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1991 Pp ix-110 Rs.26 $4

In the context of renewed interest in the inner world of the dedicated missionaries, *Missionary Musings A Search for Meaning"* offers the personal testimony of the inner struggles of Fr Roman Nubiola (1907-1991) a Jesuit from Spain. In *Musings* Nubiola shares with us how providence guided him through his struggles, intending thereby to encourage and motivate all Christians interested and involved in the spread of the Gospel

Nubiola came to India in 1934 as a young man of twenty-seven with a lot of missionary enthusiasm The ground realities of the Indian missions shattered his fervour It upset him that "after centuries of evangelisation there were relatively few Christians in India " The situation was irreconcilable with his understanding of the divine plan of salvation The initial zeal and fervour gave way to confusion and discouragement Pessimism threatened to wreck his health. It was then during his years of theology at Kurseong that the light of divine providence began to dawn on him Providence came to him in the persons of two great professors — Fr Putz and Fr Turkenburg.

In Parts II—IV of *Musings* Nubiola takes us for a theological journey through Fourth Gospel and the Letters of St Paul. He shows how the theological insights of Putz motivated him and gave him a firm basis for his missionary apostolate. In Part V he explains how the Kingdom exercise ending with the oblation in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyola can work a spiritual revolution in the life of a committed Christian. This exercise has within it the dynamism to lead a missionary from a desperate "nothing can be done" to an optimistic "Christ will lead us to victory," if only the person makes the oblation unconditionally This was the experience of Nubiola during the Ignatian retreat which he made under the direction of Fr Turkenburg.

While *doing* theology more than half a century after Nubiola *studied* theology under Putz and others, some of us may disagree with the theological views of Nubiola, with his theology of mission, of salvation or of the *Spiritual Exercises* But we must agree with the author that without a sound theology and a total commitment to the person of Jesus no apostolic commitment can last long and bear fruit As the testimony of the spiritual journey of a devout soul the autobiography is inspiring and commands respect The book contains a lot of select anecdotes from the history of the Church and of evangelisation It is a source of inspiration and strength for any Christian with some apostolic commitment especially when he/she finds fervour and hope waning

Paulose MANGAI, S.J.

Scripture

The Song of Songs. By John G SNAITH Grand Rapids Wm B. Eerdmans. 1993 Pp xii - 140 $ 14 99 ISBN 0-8028-0691-0

The author's basic attitidue to this wonderful book and yet puzzling to some is succinctly stated "The Song takes a romance between two charac-

Beauty ever ancient, Beauty ever new,
too late have i known thee.
Beauty ever ancient, Beauty ever new.

2. God is beautiful. God is the source of all that is graceful and charming. God is Source-Beauty; Beauty itself; Beauty in person.

Augustine is a credible witness. according to him, any woman, any man, collected and united in single-hearted devotion, experiences the Divine

as an inner melody, as a certain light,
a certain voice, a certain fragrance,
a certain food (and communion), a certain embrace;
— the beauty above all beauty, the indescribable
beauty, the true and unique beauty, Beauty itself.
(confession 3, c.6 10; 4,c 15 27, 10, c.6:8,
De Civ. Dei 9, c.22; sermo 12.4 4; Enchir 5)

therefore may we sing with Augustine and the psalmist,
as a deer yearns
for running waters,
so i yearn
for you, my God.
i thirst for God,
the living God,
when shall i go to see
the face of God? (Ps 42)

3. philosophy holds that being is the same as being beautiful.
to be is to be one or united, and true and good
and beautiful
all authentic existence is a unified and
harmonious realization of truth, goodness and beauty.

process theology speaks of the Lure of God.
God is Allure and Attractiveness. God is fascination,
captivating the heart, drawing us to himself
and centering us, centering all creation and giving
them direction and meaning, harmony, unity and beauty.

Augustine describes the action of divine grace, divine beauty, as *delectatio victrix* the charm of his presence, the bloom of his face, delights the heart and wins it over. So exquisite, so transformative and liberative is the touch of his Light.

creation loves this attraction, this pull of the Divine upon its heart. and it cries out with the bride of the Songs,

draw me. .. let us run...
leaping over the mountains,
bounding over the hills. (song 1:4; 2:8)

4. beauty is meaning enshrined and expressed in sensuous form. it is the harmony of the universe, the rhythm of the cosmos. it is the Light of God become the light of the mind and of the world

beauty is a dynamic striving towards the simplicity and unity of the Divine. (Augustine)

the beauty of things is an expression of God; something that has a further reference. "Things have beauty because they achieve a resemblance to God, and through this beauty they delight us and attract us; yet one must not rest and pause at them, for so they lose their beauty." (Bonaventure)

beauty is the radiant appearance of the essence. it can shine so strongly as to make us overlook the testimony to God in it. Beauty itself "always affirms something final and conclusive." (Bonaventure; U. von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord* p 351)

creaturely beauty not only points to the beauty of God, but makes the Divine Splendour present for the heart to taste and learn to love. beauty, "coming from the sovereign fullness of God, (is) received in man in the aesthetic-mystical ecstasy of wonderment and inflamed adoration." (U. von Balthasar, 352)

5. let ourselves be drawn by the beauty of the Divine present in the world. let us be sensitive to the loveliness of God expressed in history. nurture and develop an exquisite aesthetic sensibility, and a delicate sensitivity to the artistic. a magnet attracts iron, not wood. in the vicinity of the ultimate, earth-grounding Loadstone, we make ourselves response-able. we ask the Holy Spirit to touch us and render us such as can sense and yield to the magnetism of the Presence and the fascination of the Face.

let nature - contemplation and communion with the earth awaken us to the beauty of God present in the profusion all around us of light and colour and curve and scent, mountains, streams and winds, landscapes and seascapes, the

mysteries of the wild and the mysteries of the deep, the mysteries of the mind and the heartscape of people.

"for what can be known of God is perfectly plain...., since God has made it plain.... ever since the creation of the world, the invisible existence of God and his everlasting power have been clearly seen by the mind's understanding of created things" (Rom 1·19-20) and his Beauty, by the heart's communing with the earth and the sky.

the heavens tell out the glory of God
and the earth is sprinkled with his loveliness.

God makes the sky and the earth, day and night, land and sea, and, great Artist that He is, God steps back, surveys what he has fashioned and finds it good, finds it beautiful. And with the collaboration of the earth God makes a world of vegetation and a world of bird and fish and beast emerge, and he knows it is good, quite enchanting "God saw all that he had made, and indeed it was very good," exceeding beautiful (Gn 1)

6 do we not, as God's children and friends, have the privilege and the task to take his art work seriously, to pay attention to it and appreciate it not just in a general way but in detail, focusing on every shade of meaning and every nuance of beauty, every blend of colour, the convergence of lines, the architecture of trees and beasts, the twinkle in the eye of a drop of water, and every leaf's distinctive style of being a proud leaf?

should we not do at least what Adam did who burst into song as he saw Eve, God-led, stand before him: no longer the silent charm of flowers and seas and pearls, but the live beauty of sparking eyes and speaking smiles and the quintessence of all the fascination of the earth composed into exquisite brevity? And Adam took the wonder to his heart. (Gn 2)

7 then came the unbeautiful, the ugliness called sin: the refusal to trust God, the breach of friendship; the exclusion of the finest of friends from a vital decision-making act; sin that developed into the further ugliness of mutual accusation and rejection, of fratricide and arrogance, and the earth's defilement and frustration. (Gn 3 + 4)

it was then that God, angry and grieved, decided to cleanse the earth of all that was unbeautiful in a torrent of tears. He

would weave a new earth, the vision of which he symbolised in something exceptionally lovely: the rainbow, that curve of preciousness bridging the distance between earth and sky, that pair of heaven's arms embracing the world.

the rainbow is the pattern of the future world;
a world of unspeakable beauty and unity in variety.
a world of rainbow covenants and rainbow relationships between God and the earth, between God and people, among people themselves and among all things in creation. (Gn 6-9)

is it not theologically and spiritually telling and significant that God should choose of all things the rainbow as sacrament of the world of his dreams, sign of a refined web of relationships which God would have the earth develop?

8. it is for such relationships, beautiful and hearty, that the prophets plead when they call us to conversion from the hideous to the harmonious, from heartlessness to tenderness, from injustice and idolatry and death to a life of justice before the living God.

on that day of conversion and renewal of hearts
the wolf will live with the lamb,
the panther lie down with the kid....
the cow and the bear will graze,
their young will lie down together...
no hurt, no harm will be done
on all my holy mountain;
for the country will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh
as the waters cover the sea. (Isa 11:6-9)

when that beauty emerges, the great Artist-Architect will rejoice over his new creation more than he did over its first sketch.

when that day comes...
Yahweh your God...
... will rejoice over you with happy song;
he will renew you by his love,
he will dance with shouts of joy for you
as on a day of festival. (Zeph 3:16-18)

i miss in the pages of the bible a divine flute-player.
i used to miss in the bible story a God who danced.
and now a new version introduces us to a Dancing God.
how graceful, the dance of God, how awesome, how

earth-shaking.
God's dance is creative.
It is his dance that gives birth to the universe.
the cosmos is his dance.
it is to the rhythm of his dance that creation unfolds
in myriad galaxies and life-forms, songs and movements.
it is in learning to dance with the Lord, to dance his dance,
till our steps and the patterns we weave merge into his, that
creation's completion consists· physical and ethical
completion, spiritual and mystical wholeness.

9. Jesus christ is the dance of God.
God's finest work of art the most exquisite embodiment and expression, in sensuous form and spiritual sublimity, of the mind and meaning of God, of God's flaming Beauty and unutterable Loveliness Light from Light. matchlessly sculptured Image of the unseen God The reflection of God's Splendour, bearing the impress of God's own Being. (Hb 1:3, Col 1 15) Child of Beauty ever ancient, ever new. Jesus of Nazareth who grew in stature and wisdom, and in grace with God and the people (Lk 2.52).
of all men the Fairest and mos' Handsome. (Ps 45·2)
and yet was he beautiful with that
print of a slap on his cheeks,
and soldiers' spittle on his face? was Calvary beautiful with the cross and the nails, the mocking and the shame, and the utter desolation of rejection and execution?

> he had no form or charm to attract us,
> no beauty to win our hearts
> he was despised, the lowest of men,
> a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering. (Isa 53:2-3)

but it was our sufferings he was bearing,
our sorrows he was carrying. (Isa 53:4)
It was our ugliness that he took on, for love of us, in order to 'make the ugly beautiful by his love'. Love is beautiful even when it is clothed in physical defect and deformity. love produces beauty as we see in God's act of creation, and in Jesus' readiness for our sake to accept physical ugliness and 'become sin' in order to communicate to us a love that creatively produces beauty. love is the ultimate Beauty. God is Beauty because God is Love. on Calvary Jesus let go everything, lost everything, except his measureless love for

foe and friend and God and God's world. When everything broke down his love stood like the Everest, sky-high and snow-capped, clear and invincible. That was the hour of the disclosure of profound Loveliness in the depths of Calvary's ugliness. the hour of utmost Lure. it was meant to be.

when I am lifted up from the earth (on a cross)
I shall draw all people to myself. (Jn 12:32)

10. anyone who loves (the brother, the sister, the needy neighbor) has (already) passed from death to life;
(1 Jn 3:14)

Jesus loved us even to the laying down of his life and the assuming of our ugliness to liberate us from it. therefore already on the cross he passed from death to Life, from ugliness to Beauty. the Resurrection happened at the centre of the cross for at that centre burnt the unquenchable fire of Christ's Love. and love is the mother of beauty, the mother of the Resurrection and the Life.

hence Augustine's view
that Ps 45 which speaks of Jesus as the fairest of men
and Is 53 which presents Jesus as repulsive, are "like two flutes with different sounds, but the one spirit blows in both, ... and together they produce no discord. "(In 1 Jn 9.9). "Christ's beauty is all the more lovable and wondrous the less it is physical beauty." (De Civ. Dei 17, c.16.1).

hence Jesus' emphasis on our loving one another, in concrete and practical ways as the Samaritan did in the story Jesus told; as Jesus himself did, sharing his bread with hungry crowds and getting all who had something to share with their neighbour; and healing the sick, and honouring the dishonoured.

in all his ministry his central concern is to shape and strengthen a world of beautiful relationships, beautiful responses, decisions and perceptions, beautiful dealings with one another.

what would a beautiful response be when a leper meets Jesus and says, If you are willing, you can cleanse me ? (Mk 1) or when Jesus meets people who are social and religious outcasts? (Mk 2) or when a sinner from the city weeps at his feet and both he and she are despised and criticised by people around? (Lk 7) or when Jesus sees a man with a withered hand on a sabbath day, or a man born blind, or

someone crippled for 38 years or a women bent double for 18 years? Or when Jesus comes across idols of wealth or idolatry of laws and customs? (Mk 3; Jn 9+5; Lk 13)

invariably Jesus' option is for the response that is most loving, life-giving and lovely.

in conversing with the woman from Samaria, Jesus breaks down divisive, hateful, ugly traditions, and builds relationships of reverence and trust. contours of a new and beautiful community of races and sexes shine through the story.

in a world of hierarchies and patriarchies and slave-master relations, Jesus seeks to fashion a circle of friends made up of fish-workers, house-wives, tax-collectors and converted prostitutes he would have them belong together as intimately, beautifully and sharingly as a tree or a vine with its fruit-bearing branches

11. love it is that constitutes life and beauty but the foundational form of love is justice and mercy to these Jesus gives primacy (Mt 6 24-33, 23.23).

and Jesus contemplates the justice of God in the life of birds and in the beauty of flowers to them and to every creature God gives in good measure what is required for each to be itself, to be active at its level, to grow and unfold and come to completion God's justice-love is beautiful like fragrant flowers, and singing birds, and forgiven sinners.

12. we might say in brief that Jesus spent his life, every hour of it, sculpting a world of beauty, inlaid with gold threads of loving and lovely relationships his ministry is an art-act, an aesthetic step, an active engagement with imaginative shaping of a new humanity

through it all he himself became daily more beautiful, more graceful, because more loving, and ever more thoroughly caught up in the loveliness of the universe as it told out the glory of God and allured his heart so gently, so strongly.

and in the end he became God's Rainbow; God's beautiful covenant-relationship embodied for ever in human bodiliness, giving new meaning and splendour to our lowliness, our broken words and our tears.

he became for us the revelation of the face of God which all created beauty seeks to reflect with joy and pride.

he became the disclosure of the Lotus-Heart of God. and he became God's Song in which God sings himself to us; and a Poem God recites to communicate to us God's own clarity and depth, the riches of God's imagination, and the passion of God's heart.

13. the invitation has come to us
to nurse dreams of a beautiful world,
a beautiful social order,
free of the hideous and the grotesque,
free of exploitation and rich/poor gaps and imbalances,
imaging rather the reality of God's Reign
as it appeared in the hands and the heart
of Jesus of Nazareth.

the invitation is to strive for its realization,
for the construction of the new earth
where justice dwells
and to educate and equip ourselves in God's school of beauty
by contemplating and communing with
the beauty of the earth; and
the beauty of sisters and brothers and neighbours; and
the beauty of every worthy cause like justice and peace,
like freedom and fellowship;
the beauty of great lives that stood and suffered
for such causes;
the beauty of good deeds of kindness and compassion,
of sacrifice and service; and
the beauty of relationships of equality and comradeship,
and fidelity and friendship, sharing of work and
the fruit of work.
and thus in their depths to light upon
the Loveliness
and the Wonder of our God.

and bring the whole wealth
of this aesthetic-mystic experience
to our work for life and people,
and to our co-work with God
for the realization of His rainbow-dreams
for our earth. ❖

VJTR [illegible]

Feminism in India: A Western Import?

Jean D'CUNHA

In the proximity of the International Women's Day (March 8) we publish a reflection of a lecturer of Sociology at St. Xavier's College, Bombay 400001, and researcher-journalist. She clears the feminist movement in India of charges of being a Western import, showing that its roots are found in the Indian tradition itself, and of the charge of segmenting the workers' movement, explaining that the various forms of oppression must be opposed simultaneously to arrive at the new society

"Feminism and the feminist movement in India is a purely western graft, non-transplantable into the Indian culture ethos" — thus argue traditionalists and sections of the Indian left. The relevance of feminism and the feminist movement in India stands questioned.

Traditionalists maintain that while India has a long tradition of deifying and venerating women as mothers and goddesses, western feminism only defeminizes, indeed masculinizes, Indian womanhood. Sections of the left, on their part, argue that freedom from want and hunger is our immediate concern, not the petit-bourgeois luxury of feminism. They further maintain that feminism only creates gender based schisms within the working class movement, fragmenting it.

The ideological mystification of motherhood and wifehood, and goddess worship are not peculiar to India alone. They have been recurrent themes in the West as well. The rigid institutionalization of these roles and the mutually exclusive demarcation of the public and private spheres have in fact sharpened in the last two hundred years or so of western capitalist development. Barbara Bush's repeated eulogies of motherhood and family in the last American presidential campaign are a contemporary illustration of the reinforcement of these role stereotypes for western women. "Goddess cults," in the form of the cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for instance, have long existed in the West.

Further, placing women on a pedestal as mothers and goddesses, while purporting to empower women actually distances them from the core of their being, fitting them into socially imposed roles which confine, subdue, and effectively marginalize them from the pulsating life beyond the immediate realities of the home. Moreover, the myth that the goddess power is an indication of the high status of women is exploded by the evidence of the actual exploitation and oppression of real flesh-and-blood women in our goddess worshipping culture. The myth serves rather as an effective means of compensatory glorification overlaying the reality of injustice and subordination.

Lest dissent and self-assertion by Indian women be projected as a western import, it may be worthwhile to look at the dual aspect of Indian womanhood as manifested in the duality of the goddess — the benevolent, epitomized in Lakshmi, and the malevolent and aggressive in Kali. In her analysis of goddess worship in India, Dr Veena Das, Professor of Sociology in Delhi University, states that "as an energizing principle, in her Shakti form, Kali stands alone, unencompassed by a higher male principle, rushing to the defence of gods and men, destroying demonic forces that threaten the stability of the cosmic universe."[1]

The challenge to the gendered existence is not un-Indian. There are examples of non-conformism and protest in our tradition. In an insightful paper entitled, "Indian Women Poets and Tradition," Dr Eunice Desouza, poet and Head of the English Department, St Xavier's College, Bombay, highlights the sexually explicit and non-conventional poetry of two women poets — Apala and Ghosha — who composed Vedic hymns. Both their hymns are concerned with husbands. Apala was rejected by her husband because she had a disfiguring skin disease. Indra makes love to her and restores her to health. She prays:

Surely we who are hated by our husbands
should flee and unite with Indra
Make these three places sprout, O Indra
My daddy's head and field, and this part of me below the waist
That field of ours, and this my body and daddy's head
make them all grow hair [2]

1. Veena Das, "The Mythological Film and its Framework of Meaning," in *India International Quarterly* Vol 8 1, (1991), quoted by Neera Desai and Maitreyi Krishnaraj, in *Women and Society in India*, 1987

2. Eunice Desouza, "Indian Women Poets and Tradition." Paper presented at University of Loughborough, U K.

The same paper documents the voices of Buddhist nuns as recorded in a book entitled *Psalms of the Sisters (Theri-gatha)* that sings of the liberation from the kitchen drudgery and "the brutal husband ranked as even less than the sunshades he sits and weaves away." Interestingly most of the nuns were married women who had left the home for various reasons such as an attraction to the nunnery despite a happy marriage, family oppression, or homelessness.

As daring were the women poet-saints of the Bhakti movement of the 6th or 7th centuries A.D. Breaking the shackles of convention, some of these women left their matrimonial home and the luxuries it afforded, despite stiff family opposition, to become saintly poets Living a more or less bohemian life and consumed with religious fervor and devotion to a personal God, they composed poetry, sang, danced, prayed and preached in public Their poetic themes cover a variety of issues ranging from

> a struggle with their condition as body, as women and social beings restricted by social roles as human beings confined in time and space, to compositions about society's treatment of them as insane and scandalous and the familial endeavours to tame them, to passionately religious poems dedicated to a personal God, using the idiom of secular love [3]

While these voices of assertion and dissent may not have been widespread or caught the popular imagination, they certainly point to strong currents of disenchantment among sections of Indian women about their lot and are, in part, a defiant celebration, so to speak, of the liberation from social roles that tyrannized women, and of a control and domination that colonized them

Closer in time is the militant participation of women in the Indian Nationalist movement· women demonstrating and picketing in the streets, facing lathis, courting arrest, blowing up armament depots and playing the roles of couriers and spies.[4] Or for that matter, the militant struggles of women for land rights in Bodhgaya and Singbhum in Bihar and Shahada in Maharashtra, or for control over the forest and its produce in the Chipko movement, or for the demand for landed property and the constitution of all-women panchayats in Maharashtra.[5]

3. *Ibid*

4. Kumari JAYAWARDENA, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, New Delhi Kali for Women, 1986

5. Gabrielle DIETRICH, "Emerging Feminist and Ecological Concerns in Asia"

These latter struggles will undoubtedly result in a renegotiation of patriarchal power within the family and in changes in the conventional cultural imaging of women.

Sections of the left assert that our priority concern is the struggle against poverty and not the luxury of feminism. They argue that feminism fragments the working class movement on the basis of gender. While it is indisputable that freedom from economic deprivation is a pressing need, it is necessary to take cognizance of gender differentials and inequalities among the poor. For within the general culture of poverty that envelops India, there is a distinctly observable phenomenon designated by feminist scholars as the 'feminization of poverty', which in simple terms means that women are poorer, and lower caste women are the poorest among the poor. This points to the collusion of interests at a certain level between capitalism, casteism and patriarchy, making it necessary to raise demands of gender justice and equality within the general struggle against class/caste oppression and exploitation.

Equally urgent and imperative is the demand for freedom from the violation of women's bodily, sexual, emotional, intellectual and spiritual integrity — whether crass or subtle — by males of the same class or upper classes. Such violation terrorizes, paralyzes and imprisons, rendering women less than human.

Struggles for liberation from class exploitation and oppression must, therefore, go hand in hand with the fight for liberation from patriarchy.

Further, the gender-based fragmentation of the working class movement — gender division of labour, for example — predates feminism in India. The hesitance of male workers to accept women as co-partners and to divest themselves of the power and control they exercise over women is rationalized as an opposition to the feminist threat to the working class cohesion.

Feminism questions publicly this exploitation and oppression at the work place and in every other realm of life, struggling to establish gender justice and equality. Far from fragmenting the working class movement, feminism, by raising issues pertinent to working class women (and all women), welds the working class into a stronger and richer community, envisioning as it does more wholesome gender relations, both within the movement and in a future society.

(undated paper).

For, the historical experience of the once socialist societies has testified that the struggle for class equality alone is inadequate to enrich the quality of human relations: women continued to be oppressed even under socialism. Struggling against all forms of cultural oppression, including patriarchal oppression, is therefore an undoubted necessity. All these problems must be tackled simultaneously

Finally much of the misunderstanding about feminism being an irrelevant western construct stems from ambiguities in our understanding of patriarchy and feminism itself. Patriarchy is broadly defined as male control over women's sexuality, fertility and labour power Feminism, a response to this condition, is not a monolithic 'ism' What has been projected by a hostile media is a distorted understanding of one stream of feminism — "radical feminism and its bra burning adherents" Unsaid, however, is that bras were never burnt, but dumped by feminists into a 'Freedom Trash Bucket', as a symbolic gesture, resorted to in protest against the sexual objectification of women in the Miss America pageant in Atlanta City, U.S.A [6] It was not the hysterical response of 'libbers' going overboard to discard their clothing as an expression of freedom Feminism is the struggle of women to reclaim their human rights, dignity and worth as complete human beings, and to determine their own lives and destinies The humanizing process requires that each individual be provided the opportunity to explore and realize his/her potential beyond artificially imposed role or trait moulds. This humanization makes males realize that to the extent that they oppress, limit and contain women, they themselves get progressively dehumanized An essential part of the humanizing process involves males developing qualities of nurture and sensitivity, and engaging in domestic work, in the same measure as women need to grow assertive and enter the public realm. Feminism, thus, struggles not just for the liberation of womankind, but of humankind.

Though in part influenced by the West, feminism in India has largely arisen from the contradictions of the Indian socio-economic-political-cultural system and its systematic denigration of women, constitutional claims to equality and liberty notwithstanding Examples of these contradictions are: India's espousal of equality, resulting in a new breed of young urban

6. Vimal Balasubramanyam, *Mirror Image. The Media and the Women's Question*, Bombay Centre for Education and Documentation, 1988.

educated women, who yet are ironically marginalized from the processes of decision making; the needs of the economic system drawing women into the work force, while simultaneously resorting to gender-based discrimination at the work place; the rhetoric of the deified Indian womanhood, while brutalizing female children and women by way of female foeticide, female infanticide, incest, rape, domestic violence, dowry harassment, forced sterilizations, sati and the like.

Feminism in India has emerged primarily against this background. It places the invisibility of the women's contribution, their exploitation and oppression within the context of Indian capitalism; it recognizes the differential interests between Indian women; it believes that in the ultimate analysis the movement must be focused on the rural/urban working class women's agenda, with other sections of women supporting them. The necessity for the women's movement to forge alliances with other oppressed groups struggling against the system has also been stressed. It is necessary, however, to concretize this perspective in terms of definitive linkages with all working class women and alliances with other oppressed groups, lest the women's movement remain an urban dominated middle class phenomenon and run the risk of isolationism.

Lastly, while certain forms of patriarchal oppression like sexual abuse and domestic/physical violence are by and large common to all women, there are differences in the specific manifestations of patriarchy; in the perception of the immediate urgency of certain concerns of women in different societies in the class, race and other differentials, between women of the north and south in the context of unequal north/south relationships. Class, caste, religious and ethnic differences exist within the women's movement in India, as well Rather than a mindless rejection of the positive elements in Western feminism, it is necessary to unite on a common ground, raise critical questions within the Indian and international women's movement regarding the differential interests among women, point to the need for the advantaged among women to make common cause with the disadvantaged — or else we will remain a fragmented sisterhood, a fragmented humanity.

Feminism and the women's movement in India is undoubtedly relevant to our context. Only superficial analysts can dismiss it as a Western import.

[illegible]

Integral Educąation of Youth: Formal and Informal Setting

Hubert A. MONTEIRO

Dr Monteiro concludes his reflection on the education needed today in the face of the problems arising from the invasion of science and technology in our lives

III. Integral Education

In this section, I would first of all like to set out a few guiding principles of an educational philosophy in the light of what has been discussed in the two precedings section. With these guideposts, I shall then make practical suggestions which could be implemented both in our formal systems of education and in more informal settings like the home and the mass media.

1. Guiding Principles

Hervé Carrier outlines some basic principles of a new humanism in the context of the present scientific age:[20]

— Specialization can be reconciled with an interest for global problems.
— Empirical research does not depreciate ethical pursuits
— scientific abstraction does not eliminate compassion.
— identification with one's culture does not cut us off from other civilisations

The paper of Harlan Cleveland cited earlier[21] lists seven basic tenets of what he calls "The Emerging Ethic of Ecology":

---

20. Hervé CARRIER "Can Scientists be Spiritual Humanists?" *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Science, Technology and Spiritual Values*, Tokyo, 25-29 May 1987, pp 276-2[illegible].

21 Harlan CLEVELAND, Paper presented at Symposium of the World Academy of Art and Science, Lisbon, Portugal, May 11, 1982.

A. There must be a minimum entitlement to human needs by virtue of being born into the human family, no matter in which country of the world.
B. Affluence must be regulated so that no one individual or group can take more than a fair share from the finite pool of world resources.
C. There must be a limit to the damage people can cause to the physical environment (air and water pollution, stripping of the land, thinning of the ozone shield, inducing of the "greenhouse effect").
D. People-managed processes need to be controlled to eliminate or at least minimize risks (family planning decisions, nuclear power plants, chemical reactions, traffic accidents, weather modification, genetic engineering).
E. The rate at which people use up non-renewal resources (fossil fuels, hard minerals) must be curtailed.
F. Practices that affect the renewability of renewable resources must be curbed (soil erosion, destruction of wild life, overcropping of farmland, denudation of forests, overfishing of lakes and oceans) so that future generations will not live in deprivation.
G. Cultural identity must be preserved by not imposing ideologies or social systems of any one group on others.

If these be the principles of natural justice, religion can provide a deeper meaning for the preservation of God's creation and a stronger motivation of love for service of one's fellow human beings.

A greater realization of God's Fatherhood of the whole human family will bring about more effective co-operation at the international, national and local levels, fostering a stronger sense of interdependence among individuals and nations. To promote this sense of communion, "attitudes which define each individual's relationship with self, with neighbour, with the remotest human communities, and with nature itself must be changed."[22]

With religious motivation, "voluntary poverty, understood as detachment" will be encouraged "as a responsible life-style to reduce, if not to check, our contemporary wastefulness and destruction of both renewable and non-renewable resources and to redress the inequity between developed and developing countries."[22]

22. "Poverty and the Environment", *VJTR*, 56/8 (Aug. 1992).

Religion provides a deeper appreciation of nature as a gift of God and hence a desire to nurture it rather than destroy it. The monastic tradition enables the monk to live in symbiotic harmony with nature and the Hindu tradition of "vanaprastha" recommends seeking refuge in the forest to attain spiritual emancipation. St Bonaventure, inspired by the ideals of St Francis, wrote : "Open your eyes ..., alert the ears of your spirit, unlock your lips, and apply your heart that you may see, hear, praise, love and adore, magnify and honour your God in every creature, lest perhaps the entire universe rise against you."[23]

How can these guiding principles be implemented practically?

2. The Teaching of Religion

From the two preceding sections it is clear that only very rarely has a real integration been achieved between religious faith on the one hand and a scientific and technological mentality on the other. Attitudes ranging from agnosticism and indifference to a type of religious fundamentalism have been observed, with a fair number experiencing a kind of dichotomy in their lives whereby one's life of faith and one's secular life coexist, as it were, without any real interaction between the two.

If religion is to be really meaningful to contemporary people, it cannot be taught as a set of doctrines one must accept to attain salvation Nor can it proclaim an anti-scientific creed which decries science and technology as the root cause of all the problems of today Concepts of God opposing evolutionary theory or current cosmological hypotheses, and ethical principles at variance with population control will hardly find acceptance.

While belief in God is essential to most religions — barring perhaps Buddhism — God cannot be proposed as an anthropomorphic being intervening directly in all natural occurrences. The traditional catechism approach is perhaps too simplistic for the scientific age

The idea of God as Creator of the Universe is readily acceptable, even if the "Big Bang" theory of the origin of the cosmos is proved. More important, however, God must be presented as the Source of Truth and Love, giving meaning to our life by making us a sharer in His Divine Love so that we are inspired by it to love our fellow men and women.

23. St Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, I, 15.

The hierarchical organisational structure of religion is not appealing to modern man, especially if it is autocratic. Religion must rather be taught as upholding human dignity and justice and practising real poverty and charity. These virtues could be the basis of a code of moral conduct, especially in the context of promoting sound ecology and genuine social concern.

A spirit of pluralism and tolerance is to be strongly inculcated in the youth to fight against fundamentalism, so rampant in Asian countries today. Care must be exercised not to present any one religion as the sole custodian of truth, but rather to recognize all that is true and good and beautiful in all religions and even in the practices of professed atheists. Dialogue among religions is to be strongly encouraged "for it leads to love and mutual respect, and takes away, or at least diminishes, prejudices among the followers of various religions and promotes unity and friendship among peoples."[24] Dialogue can take several forms among the youth: joint celebration of religious festivals, multi-religious prayer meetings, inter-religious discussion groups on themes like suffering, faith and science, peace. Especially to be recommended are projects involving social service and communal harmony in which young people of different religions collaborate with each other.

3. The Teaching of Science and Technology

Efforts must be made "to create an elaborate science of nature without bringing about that modern alienation of man from nature and also from God which has already withered away the soul of modern man and is now threatening his very physical survival."

Besides imparting of scientific and technical knowledge, educators must produce the following effects on students:

— the stimulation of creativity;
— a balanced outlook concerning the scope and limitations of science and technology vis-à-vis religion;
— an understanding of the relevance of one's particular field of specialisation to other fields and to life in general;
— an appreciation of the deeper expressions and aspirations of traditional cultures and a motivation to harmonize them with the "scientific temper";
— a concern for the use of one's particular field of study for

24. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, 30 Dec 1988.

the benefit of humanity and especially of the marginalised;
— a consciousness of the ethical implications of one's field of activity;
— a concern for the preservation of the environment while probing the secrets of nature or utilising natural resources.

It is unfortunate that in India — and presumably in other developing countries as well — there is a tendency to specialize and complete technical courses as soon as possible so that one can earn one's livelihood at an early age. Often the result is a very poor general formation. Writing and other communication skills are inadequately developed Knowledge of philosophy, literature and the arts is limited. And even in science and technology, the links between one's area of specialisation and other branches of knowledge are weak. Consequently, students do not develop a balanced personality and have very few interests outside their field of activity. The situation is well summed up by Sr Daphne Furtado in her description of the Indian Science Graduate:

> The average student is a mechanical toy robot He/she can trot out formulae and principles, answer examination questions according to the past University examination papers, repeat in meticulous sequence at a practical examination the prescribed experiments often repeated innumerable times in the lab, and tread the straight and narrow furrow ploughed by teachers and past generations of students [28]

To stimulate creativity, Sr Furtado has successfully initiated small projects linked to the prescribed syllabus at Sophia College, Bombay, where she teaches. Thus, studies of the effect of soil micro-organisms on selected media or the effect of ultraviolet light on DNA interactions with dyes and chromium have been carried out. Group seminar presentations on any topic culled from scientific journals are also organised with the same objective of promoting creativity. Typical themes have been:
— The triumph of mind over matter (psychosomatic disorders).
— DNA finger-printing as a tool in forensic science.
— Pregnancy against all odds (nutritional requirements).

Says Sr Daphne: "Creativity is encouraged when the teacher changes from being the authoritative signal of knowledge and merges with the group as helper and guide."

Science students sometimes develop wrong notions of the

28. Daphne FURTADO, "Research Projects for Undergraduates." Talk given at Conference of Jesuits in Science, Bombay, April 1989

scope of their discipline and easily fall into the trap of a reductionism which tends to make science the only valid path to truth. To guard against such aberrations, it is strongly recommended to include a course of Philosophy of Science in the school or college curriculum. Such courses will provide a proper balance to the study of science and ensure the formation of a better developed personality in the student. It is also advisable to avoid specialisation at too early a stage. Some knowledge of the arts — literature, history and geography — is indispensable for the general development of a scientist or an engineer.

In the teaching of science itself, it is essential to draw the attention of the student to the significance of various scientific concepts in everyday life or in phenomena that one observes in the universe. For example, the concept of entropy in thermodynamics could well be applied to natural processes taking place. What would this mean if applied to the origin of the universe? Does it support creation? What will it mean in terms of the end of the world?

If social awareness is to be awakened in students of science, it is first of all necessary to draw their attention to the social implications of the type of activity they will eventually engage in. They must be made conscious of the abuses of science and technology, "the threat to human life and dignity, environmental pollution, the development of armaments, excessive consumerism and, more fundamentally, the domination of technology by a mentality that makes technical efficiency and economic profit the sole criteria for decision making."[26]

Equally important is to motivate scientists and technologists in the making to use their knowledge and talents for the service of humankind. In this connection, reference is often made to appropriate technology which has been defined by the World Council of Churches as "a technology which harmonizes with the needs, the civilisation and the way of life of a particular society." A good example is the conversion of waste natural products like coconut fibre, rice husk, groundnut shells and bagasse, so commonly found in Asian countries, into commercially useful and strong particle boards. Students should be encouraged to use their ingenuity to conduct research in such areas that would bring benefit to their societies, combining if

26. Concluding Statement of the Seminar on Science, High Technology and Faith, Hong Kong, 5-10 Dec. 1988, *Atheism and Dialogue*, XXIV/1 (1989).

necessary indigenous methods of fabrication with Western technology.

The best way to create social awareness, however, is by getting involved in social service projects. The Sophia College, Bombay, science students, for instance, collaborate with the Consumer Guidance Society in analysing samples of water, milk, food colourings and drugs from different areas in Bombay. They have also been requested to analyse the protein content of various foods.

It is not uncommon to find even today scientists and technologists unconcerned with the ethical implications of their work. Some would claim that they are only expanding the frontiers of knowledge If the results of their work are used by politicians for evil ends, they should not be held responsible. The case of the development of atomic energy has been cited as an example. The use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes like power generation is beneficial to humanity The scientist and technologist must, however, be aware of the harmful effects of atomic weapons. In addition, very few take cognizance of the problem of the disposal of atomic wastes from nuclear reactors Likwise, ethical issues related to genetic engineering are of great significance today Questions of this kind need to be debated among science and engineering students to make them more aware of their moral responsibilities

Environmental protection is a burning issue today and yet does not feature in the syllabi of general courses in Science and Engineering In courses of Life Sciences at St Xavier's College, Bombay, students can specialize in Environmental Studies. It is gathered that about 20% of the students opt for this specialization Given the importance of this subject, it is strongly recommended that it be included in all courses of Science and Technology, and even, in an elementary way, in school curricula.

The same Department of Life Sciences has conducted some excellent projects in the study of pollution in Bombay and the surrounding areas, such as environmental mutagenesis, noise pollution, river pollution, contamination of coastal areas, automobile exhausts and nuclear pollution Projects such as these are worthy of emulation in other colleges and universities.

The projects have materialized thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of the teaching faculty. It is gathered, however, that it is not always easy to motivate students to participate in these projects. It is only by providing them with the incentive of

earning credits through the projects to merit an "Honours" certificate that they are induced to accept such project assignments. It appears, however, that once they get involved, they begin to take a real interest in them.

4. Interdisciplinarity

The XIII General Assembly of the International Federation of Catholic Universities laid great stress on the necessity of a healthy dialogue between the physical and human sciences, stating: "Every technological innovation has economic, sociological, psychological, cultural implications and to neglect the study of these questions can have disastrous consequences."[27]

The example has been cited of modern methods of irrigation to augment the yields of various crops. Attractive as this might appear, such new techniques bring in their wake social problems for those accustomed to more traditional methods of cultivation. The construction of dams often involves the uprooting of local populations which have to be re-located. In fact, almost every agricultural, mining, power generation and even industrial manufacturing project has social, psychological, cultural, economic and ecological repercussions. Such concerns are often lost sight of in the implementation of projects and give rise to disastrous consequences

A university should be an ideal place to promote interdisciplinarity. Unfortunately, with increasing specialisation, each faculty wishes to preserve its autonomy and lives in its own ivory tower. Is it not time to break down the barriers between the different faculties and promote a healthy collaboration among them? Should not practical scientific and engineering projects be associated with corresponding studies on the economic, social, cultural and psychological level?

An excellent example of such collaboration is provided by the students of Sophia College, under the guidance of Sr Daphne Furtado:[28]

> Collaboration takes on a new meaning when faculty and students of two or more departments plan programmes together. Any topic can be viewed kaleidoscopically to provide differing and intriguing inter-disciplinary dimensions. Some examples of such attempts include the comparative study of allopathic, ayurvedic and homeopathic approaches to disease states from the chemical, biochemical and pharmaceutical viewpoints, or a "closer look at

27. *Science sans Conscience*, édition Labor et Fides, Geneva (1980), p.129.

memory" by the Life Sciences and Psychology departments, or the biological, medical, political, social and bio-ethical implications of foeticide, especially of the female child

Inter-disciplinarity thus not only cultivates wider interests among scientists of other disciplines; it also fosters a better appreciation of science by students of the humanities. To quote Hervé Carrier: "The spirit of inter-disciplinarity is helping all of us to understand modern sciences as one of the paths towards the knowledge of all realities, material or immaterial, towards the contemplation of all truth and beauty."[29]

5. The Inculcation of Values

Education will have failed in its primary objective if it has not suceeded in imbuing students with a strong sense of values. While this is true of education in general, it is all the more applicable today when the erosion of values in public life is so conspicuous. Materialism has clouded spiritual values. Consumerist tendencies have engendered selfishness. Technical superiority has bred distrust between nations. Political and economic power has often been attained at the cost of grave injustices. The enforcement of legal measures to curb such aberrations will not succeed unless a real change of heart is brought about through education.

Some of these values have been hinted at in enunciating the guiding principles of education (Section 3). They will be stated more explicitly in this section.

The Final Document of the International Seminar on "Poverty and the Environment" referred to earlier[30] states :

> In an independent world of limited resources, there should be instilled in every person a sense of detachment from those material goods which are not absolutely necessary This type of humanistic orientation is especially necessary in the affluent parts of the world Only a sincere effort to overcome egoism and self-seeking will allow humankind to develop equitable programmes of sustainable development

True humanism is fostered by the inculcation of sound human values, some of which are listed below:

— Compassion for one's fellowmen as preached by many religions, particularly by Buddhism in its Four Noble Truths, or the Filipino path of "Damay" which is an emphasis on "suffering with."

— Equality of all persons, irrespective of caste, creed, social

30. "Poverty and the Environment", VJTR, 56/8 (Aug. 1992).

status or gender.
— Pluralism and tolerance which presuppose a respect for all religions.
— Dignity of labour which does not despise any form of manual work, least of all that involved in the disposal of excreta and in maintaining sanitation and cleanliness
— Openness to truth from whatever source: religion, science, human experience.
— Contemplation seeking to reflect on life and relationships with God and other fellow beings, so strongly emphasized in Oriental religions
— Aesthetic sensibility enabling one to appreciate various forms of cultural expression
— A spirit of collaboration rather than of competition to promote not only advances in science and technology but also all that is true and good and beautiful.

These values can be communicated through the teaching of various subjects themselves the physical sciences, the social sciences and literature Certain colleges organise special extra-curricular courses and activities to promote them, be they sports, dramatics, lectures or debates Whatever the means, the imparting of values must find a place in education today

6. The Mass Media

Since most young people pass through the portals of educational institutions, they will be exposed to some sort of formal education Nevertheless, for the benefit of the uneducated — of which there are a significant number in the poorer Asian countries — and even for those who do go to school, the mass media can be a very effective means of education It is worthwhile therefore to reinforce some of the messages already conveyed through academic structures by means of the media. One might as well use the fruits of modern technology to reach millions of people at one time! It has been pointed out that "in as much as the mass media have become the chief source of information and education in our modern world, and of guidance and inspiration at the level of individual, family and social behaviour, then it must offer information which is full, consistent, accurate and true."[29]

Television could be used very effectively to give the general

29. L. Morren, "Technologie et Tiers Monde," *Revue des Questions Scientifiques*, 152/2, 1981, 241-254

public a more authentic view of different religions to rid them of religious prejudices. Given the popularity of such programmes witnessed in India, they could certainly be employed to more advantage. The numerous religious festivals celebrated in Asian countries provide an excellent opportunity for appropriate broadcasts.

Since contemporary culture is so much conditioned by the impact of science and technology, popular science programmes on television are an excellent means of educating the general public on major scientific developments in a way intelligible to the average layman. Hervé Carrier refers to an "ethical covenant between science and society" whereby humankind is consciously becoming ever more aware of its unity, of its rights, of its aspirations, of its common responsibility, and of its justified appeal to the conscience of experts . This enlightened dialogue between the scientific sector and the public has to be encouraged as a new dimension of modern culture.[29]

The mass media needs to give coverage to human and environmental problems, and especially to those faced by developing countries. It is heartening to note that commercial networks like "Star TV" broadcast from Hong Kong, despite their consumerist advertisements, have begun to draw the attention of the viewing public to the dangers of pollution. A rather novel environmental educational programme to propagate the importance of adequate forest cover for the well-being of people has been launched in India by a village school teacher, using a local folk art known as 'Yakshagana'[30] The ballet-drama describing the episode of a tree portrays the plight of a nation without trees It is staged by a troupe of school-going children between the ages of 12 and 16 Such use of the mass media helps to alleviate deprivation and misery by teaching sound protection of nature and the right use of resources

The mass media can be a powerful means of bridging the gap between tradition and modernity, pointing to ways of harmonizing the two It can educate people to improve rural conditions and to stem disorderly urbanization It can focus on social problems and propose broad solutions. In fact, all the values referred to earlier in discussing formal education can also be transmitted through this potent channel of communication. ●

30. "Teaching ecology through Yakshagana," *The Times of India*, Nov. 25, 1992.

VJTR 58 (1994) 91-105

Bishop-Religious Relationship according to CIC and CCEO

Dr Antony PINHEIRO, O.C.D.

In the context of the Synod on Religious Life later this year the author presents a detailed canonical study of the problems that often arise in the Church concerning the bishop of a diocese and the religious living and working in it. In this first part Dr Pinheiro deals with the questions of autonomy, exemption and general mutual relationships as found in the Latin and Oriental Codes of Law In a second part next month he will cover the concrete areas of activity where the relationship is actually exercised Dr Pinheiro is a lecturer in Canon Law at the St Joseph's Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Alwaye 683103, Kerala

The Ninth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will be held in Rome in September-October this year. The theme of the Synod is "The Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and in the World " In the light of the working document (*Lineamenta*) published in 1992 by the Secretariate of the Synod, preparations at various levels are going on. The Lineamenta deals with the issue of bishop-religious relationship in nn. 39 and 40.

As a preparation for the Synod, the Union of Superiors General organised an Extraordinary Congress on *Religious Life Today* which was held in Rome in November-December 1993 The main objectives of this Congress were:

— to verify and promote the self-understanding of religious life starting from the key readings, "identity, communion and mission";
— to study the problems that the religious encounter;
— to indicate the operative lines which the religious should propose in the Synod.

For study and reflection a questionnaire was circulated to the religious through their major superiors. This questionnaire contained three main questions with various sub-questions. The

second question was: "What is the situation and how are the relations between the bishops, secular clergy, laity and the religious?" The positive aspects, the main problems, the future perspectives were to be pointed out.

In India the CBCI has initiated a study and reflection on "consecrated life and its mission in the situation of our country" by sending a questionnaire to the bishops. It has three parts. Part II, section 6, deals with the issue of bishop-religious relationship The Regional Bishops' Councils are also engaged in the study of the *Lineamenta* They also organized consultations at the diocesan and regional levels

The bishop-religious relationship has been always a burning issue and a vexed problem, and continues to be so though in a different way There are conflicts and tensions between bishops and religious There are defects and deviations in their mutual relationship at the national, regional and local levels

The Second Vatican Council outlined certain fundamental principles for good relations between the bishop and religious in the Church On May 14, 1978, the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for Religious jointly published the document *Mutuae Relationes* (MR) and proposed the fundamental practical criteria for more fruitful relations The CIC indicates the norms of action for various instances of bishop-religious relationship On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of MR, the Cardinal Prefects of the Roman Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for Religious jointly sent a letter to the Presidents of the Conferences of Bishops and of the Major Superiors of religious institutes, and invited them to reflect attentively on the document Pope John Paul II in his addresses to the bishops and to the religious repeatedly emphasizes the need of maintaining and fostering good relations between bishops and religious in the dioceses

In some assemblies of CBCI and in the CBCI-CRI joint committee meetings the issue of bishop-religious relatioship has been a bone of contention

In October 1991 CCEO came into force In interritual matters and relations the Latins have to take into account also the prescriptions of CCEO and the particular law of Oriental Churches. Our Indian church is at a turning point in its history The Syro-Malabar Church has become a full-fledged "sui iuris" church. Its Synod will promulgate its particular law in due time. Religious of various oriental religious institutes exist and work in

some Latin dioceses. Many orientals are members of Latin religious institutes in India, and in some they outnumber the Latin members (e.g., the SDB, MSFS, CMF, etc.). Oriental religious of Latin religious institutes have their own house/s or province attached to oriental eparchies.

All these factors impel us to take up a study of bishop-religious relationship in the light of CIC and CCEO. Since our Indian Church is multi-ritual in nature, a comparative presentation of the theme will be beneficial

The chief purpose of this study is to highlight the relevant norms given in CIC (the Latin Code of Canon Law, 1983) and to point out their corresponding or parallel provisions given in CCEO (the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, 1990) For various reasons, I have not attempted a detailed, analytical and critical comparative study of these canonical provisions.

At the start, a general outline of the canons on religious life given in CIC and CCEO is presented, the general sources of religious canon law are mentioned, the section of canons on bishop-religious relationship is also pointed out. Then, the meaning and implications of Autonomy and Exemption, the two canonical institutions closely connected with the issue of bishop-religious relationship, are briefly discussed. Next, the bishop-religious relationship on the basis of the juridical status of religious institutes as Pontifical, Sui Iuris, Diocesan and Patriarchal is explained. Finally, the particular areas of bishop-religious relationship in the diocese are enumerated and elaborated in the light of CIC and CCEO It is the most central part of this study.

I. Canons on Religious Life in CIC and CCEO

1.1. CIC 573-746 deal with "Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life" (Book II, Part III) This part has two sections, the one on "Institutes of Consecrated Life," and the other on "Societies of Apostolic Life" (cc. 731-746) Section I includes three titles The first title gives the "Norms Common to All Institutes of Consecrated Life" (cc 573-606) Title 2 treats "Religious Institutes" (cc 607 709), while title 3 deals with "Secular Institutes" (cc.710-730) To our purpose, the main attention is given to titles 1 and 2 (cc.573-606 and 607-709)

CCEO, Title XII, cc.410-572 deal with "Monks and Other Religious as well as Members of Other Institutes of Consecrated Life" This Title has four chapters.

Chapter I	—	Monks and Other Religious (cc.410-533)
Chapter II	—	Societies of Common Life according to the Manner of Religious (cc.554-562)
Chapter III	—	Secular Institutes (cc.563-569)
Chapter IV	—	Other forms of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (cc.570-569)

Chapter I is divided into three articles. Art.1 gives "General Canons" (cc.410-432); Art.2 is on "Monasteries" (cc.433-503), Art.3 presents "Orders and Congregations" (cc.504-553). For our interest and concern, Chapter I with its three articles is all-important.

1.2. The Terminology Employed in CIC and CCEO

CIC	CCEO
Religious Institutes (cc 607-709)	Monasteries (cc.433-503)
Secular Institutes (cc 710-730)	Orders and Congregations (cc.504-553)
Hermits / Anchorites (c.603)	Societies of Common Life (cc.554-562)
Order of Virgins (c.604)	Secular Institutes (cc.563-569)
Societies of Apostolic Life (cc 731 746)	Ascetics / Hermits (c 570)
	Consecrated Virgins / Widows (c.570)
	Societies of Apostolic Life (c 572)

1.3. The Sources of Canon Law on Religious Life

CIC:

1917 CIC, cc 487-672 "De Religiosis"
LG 43-47
CD 333-35
PC
ES I and II (Paul VI, Apostolic Letter, "Norms for implementing CD and PC," 6 8 66)
Renovationis Causam (SCRIS, "Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Formation," 6 1 69)
Venite Seorsum (SCRIS, "Instruction on the Contemplative Life," 15 8 69)
Evangelica Testificatio (Paul VI, "Apostolic Extortation on the Renewal of Religious Life according to Vatican II," 29 6 71)
Mutuae Relationes (SCRIS SCEp, "Directives for Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious in the Church," 23 4 78)

CCEO:

Pius XII, Motu Propio "Postquam Apostolicis Litteris" De Monachis ceterisque Religiosis, 9 2 52 (231 canons)
LG 43-47
CD 33-35
PC
OE 6
UR 16
Post-Conciliar Documents

1.4. Three states of Life in the Church

CIC 207 speaks about three canonical states of life in the Church, namely, the lay state, the clerical state, and the conse-

crated state. CCEO 323.2 distinguishes between the lay state and the clerical state of life (as in CIC 207.1), while CCEO 410 refers to "religious state of life" (as in CIC 207.2, 574.1 and 2).

I. 5. Canons on Bishop-Religious Relationship

CIC gives various provisions on bishop-religious relationship in general in the chapter dealing with the norms common to all institutes of consecrated life (cc.573-606). In particular the topic is treated in the chapter on the religious apostolate (CIC 673-683).

CCEO presents certain norms on Bishop-Religious relationship in general at the very beginning of chapter I of the Title XII, just after defining religious life· "Dependence of the Religious on the Eparchial Bishop, the Patriarch and the Apostolic See" (CCEO 412-417). The particular areas of relationship are treated in other canons of the same chapter (CCEO 418-553). CCEO does not set apart a separate section to deal with the apostolate of religious and the consequent relations between bishop and religious in the diocese.

II. Autonomy of Religious Institutes

CIC 586, 578 (Not given in CCEO)

LG 45, CD 35 2-4, MR 13c, 34, 9c-d, 28, 52, PC 2b, ES II 16.3

One of the guiding principles for the revision of Canon Law (CIC and CCEO) was the principle of subsidiarity. Such a principle was aptly applied to the legislation on consecrated life. To that effect an important affirmation in CIC is the autonomy of all religious institutes in the Church (c 586). A similar provision is not given in CCEO.

Through CIC 586, the supreme legislator has acknowledged (*'agnoscitur'*, not *'conceditur'*) the just autonomy (*iusta autonomia*) of every institute of consecrated life. Such an autonomy is a *"ius nativum,"* a right derived from the very ecclesial nature and the mission of consecrated life in the Church of Christ. It is not a privilege, a possibility, a concession granted by law.

Autonomy signifies the right to evolve proper norms for oneself, within the limits indicated by the universal laws of the Church, and the right to live and act as a self-governing community/institute (juridical person) according to such norms, so that it can preserve (*fideliter servare*) its "patrimony" (charism) (CIC 578). Acknowledging this right of autonomy, the law pre-

scribes also as an obligation of each institute to safeguard and protect its patrimony (CIC 578 & 586.1). And, according to CIC 586.2, the local ordinaries should safeguard and protect the autonomy of each institute.

The autonomy acknowledged by law is '*iusta autonomia*'. It is not an absolute or unlimited right in the Church. The '*iusta*' aspect of autonomy depends on the nature, character, spirit and purpose of each institute The judgement and juridical determination of autonomy as '*iusta*' is not up to the institute and its members, it is not a right of the superiors or chapters of the institute, though they do have their own role according to the norms of the law In the final juridical moment, it is the responsibility of the hierarchical authority of the Church. Principally this judgement is made through the approval of the Constitutions of the Institute by the Apostolic See or by the diocesan bishop as the case may be according to law (cf. CIC 587, 594, 593) In short, just autonomy means an autonomy within the limits of common law and in keeping with the proper law of an institute duly approved by the competent authority of the Church. It is not an unrestricted autonomy

III. Exemption

CIC 591
CCEO 412.2
LG 45b, CD 35.3, MR 8, 22 c and e

Exemption is a traditionally existing canonical institution connected with the bishop-religious relationship in the Church. In the context of the "*iusta autonomia*" of religious institutes guaranteed by law, exemption is not so relevant now. However, CIC and CCEO have not abolished it In fact, the conciliar and post-conciliar teachings of the Church positively speak about exemption (LG 45b, CD 35.3, MR 8, 22 c and e) Canon law has followed this line. CIC 591 and CCEO 412.2 prescribe exemption as a "papal possibility" However, after the promulgation of CIC and CCEO the exempted religious institutes of the past still remain exempted by virtue of CIC 4 (CCEO 5), unless new decrees from the Apostolic See modify or change the situation.

The difference between autonomy and exemption is that autonomy is an exigency deriving from the charism of an institute, a constitutive aspect of religious life, while exemption is only a possibility, a concession granted by the Apostolic See for

the greater advantage of autonomy, for reinforcing it or for a higher grade of autonomy.

The scope of exemption is: (a) a better provision for the good of the institute; (b) a better provision for the needs of apostolate; (c) the common good of the Church (CIC 591; CCEO 412.2; LG 45, CD 35.3, MR 22).

The presence of exempt religious in a diocese is a sign and a reminder of the diocesan bishop's pastoral concern for the needs of the universal Church and his communion with the Pope and his apostolic mission in the Church (LG 23b, AG 38a, MR 8, 22d, 23c). In the past the exemption of the religious helped for missionary expeditions, for the expansion of the Church, for specialised apostolic services (though some religious have misused their exemption and caused problems to diocesan bishops).

Exemption does not exempt religious form a diocesan insertion, collaboration and cooperation in their apostolic services. It does not stop them from being fully engaged in the diocesan life, or from bringing to it their specific witness, mission and apostolic service. Exemption is not for an evasion of a sincere collaboration at the diocesan level. Religious are also part of the diocesan family (CD 34). Religious are in and for the universal Church by being in and for the diocesan church (John Paul II).

The exempt religious and institutes are at the disposal of the Apostolic See for the common good of the universal Church. But in the actual "exercise" of the works of the apostolate in each diocese, they are also subject to the authority of the diocesan bishop in accordance with the prescriptions of law. And, they are free from the authority of the diocesan bishop only in accordance with the law.

Cf CIC		397, 567, 678-679, 683, 801-803, 806, 823-824, 831-832, 1320
	CCEO	415 1, 543, 416, 415 2, 420 3, 417, 635, 639, 632, 636 1, 638, 652, 654, 662, 660, 653, 415 4
	CD	33-35, ES I, 25-40

IV. Bishop-Religious Relationship

IV.1. The four-fold functions

CIC 576 refers to the "interpreting, constituting, moderating and caring" authority of the hierarchy (bishops) in relation to religious life. A corresponding provision is not given in CCEO (cf. LG 45a, 43.) For the concrete exercise of this four-fold func-

tion of the hierarchical authority in relation to religious life, the Codes give other norms. The four-fold competency of a diocesan bishop over a religious community/institute is juridically determined according to the juridical condition of religious institutes as "pontifical", "sui iuris" and "diocesan" (according to CCEO, as "pontifical," "sui iuris," "patriarchal," "eparchial").

IV.2. The Bishop and Religious Institutes of Pontifical Right

A religious institute of pontifical right is an institute of consecrated life which has been erected by the Apostolic See or approved by a formal decree of the same (CIC 589; CCEO 505). According to present law, it is essentially the erection or formal approval of an institute by the Apostolic See which establishes it as pontifical. An institute may, after its establishment as a diocesan institute, later seek recognition as a pontifical institute. Normally this takes place after considerable growth and the spread of the institute to various dioceses.

All religious, by reason of their vow of obedience, are bound to obey the Pope as their highest superior (CIC 590.2; CCEO 412). However, the religious of pontifical right are directly under the authority of Pope/Apostolic See. In the realm of governance within the institute of pontifical right an authority below the Apostolic See cannot interfere. The norms of the Constitutions of such an institute assume the same legal force as pontifical laws. In the case of clerical religious institutes of pontifical right the major superiors become Ordinaries in law (CIC 134.1; CCEO 984.3).

The degree and extension of diocesan bishops' power over the religious of pontifical right is, in a certain sense, limited. In the light of CIC 586.2, a diocesan bishop has the obligation to protect and promote the religious life in keeping with the charism of whatever community/institute of pontifical right exists and works in his diocese. When the bishop presents the quinquennial report to the Apostolic See, he has to include also the required information about the religious of pontifical right institutes that exist and work in his diocese (CIC 399; CCEO 206).

The diocesan bishop has the authority to visit churches, oratories, schools and other religious and charitable works carried out in his diocese by the religious of pontifical institutes (CIC 397.1 and 2, 628.2; 683.1, CCEO 415.2; 420.3; 414.1.n.3; CD 35; ES I,38 and 39.2). He can prohibit a religious belonging to what-

ever category of institute of consecrated life from remaining in his diocese for "gravissima causa" (CIC 679).

All are subject to the bishop's authority in those matters which involve the care of souls, public exercise of divine worship, and other works of apostolate in the diocese (CIC 678; CCEO 415.1; CD 35; ESI 39). The bishop has the power to foster various forms of apostolate in his diocese, to coordinate, under his direction, all the works of apostolate, with due regard for the character of each apostolate, to insist and urge the religious to take up various works of apostolate, according to the condition and the talents of each, and according to the needs of place and time (CIC 394; CCEO 203). He should also promote an orderly cooperation and coordination of various kinds of apostolic works and activities among various religious institutes and also between the religious and secular clergy (CIC 680; MR 55, 56 and 59) Respecting the purpose of the specific apostolate for which the House of an institute is erected in the diocese, the diocesan bishop can entrust works of apostolate to the religious of pontifical right. Such works are subject to the authority and direction of the bishop (CIC 681 1; CCEO 415.3).

It is the diocesan bishop who appoints the rector of a church belonging to clerical religious institutes of pontifical right (CIC 557.2, CCEO 305). The person is presented to the bishop by the competent superior. The bishop has the right to preach the word of God also in the churches and oratories of religious of pontifical right (CIC 763, CCEO 610.1).

The prior consent of the diocesan bishop (local ordinary) of the diocese where a clerical religious intends to remain is required when he is given the exclaustration by the superior general (CIC 686, CIC 693; CCEO 478, 489, 548, 494). The bishop has the authority to incardinate to his diocese or to take "ad experimentum" an exclaustered religious (CIC 686; CCEO 478, 489, 548), and those who have received an indult of departure from the Institute. He can also refuse them (CIC 693, 701; CCEO 494).

For the canonical erection of a religious house a prior written consent of the diocesan bishop is necessary (CIC 609; CCEO 436.2, 509.1). Permission is also required to build a church attached to the religious house (CIC 1215.3; CCEO 437.1, 509.2). For the suppression of a house the bishop should be consulted, though his consent is not necessary (CIC 616.1; CCEO 438, 507.2).

The consent of the bishop is required if a religious house is to be used for apostolic works other than those for which it was established (CIC 612; CCEO 437.1, 2).

Comparative list of the canons concerning the relations between the Bishops and the Religious of Pontifical right:

CIC	CCEO
589	505
590	412
134 1	984, 3
399	206
397 1 & 2, 628.2, 683 1	415 2, 420.3, 414 1 n 3
679	
678	415 1
394	203
680	
557 2	305
681 1	415 3
686	478, 489, 548
691	494
763	610 1
609	436 2, 509 1
1215 3	437 1, 509 2
616 1	438, 507 2
612	437 1, 2

IV.3. Diocesan Bishop and "sui iuris" Houses

Respecting the long standing tradition of monastic religious life in the Church, the Codes have given a particular juridical status to monastic communities. In law the communities of monastic life are called "sui iuris" houses/monasteries (CIC 613-615, CCEO 433-436).

CCEO considers monastic life as the most typical form of religious life and hence gives it primary importance and priority (CCEO 433 503). In the case of CIC, the Code Commission (PCCICR) had first maintained such an approach to religious life (cf 1977 Schema), but later gave it up. However, CIC has taken into account the tradition of monastic life, its peculiar structures and has prescribed suitable norms for monastic life within the section on the norms common to all religious institutes (cf CIC 613-615, 616 3-4, 620, 628.2.n 1, 630.3, 638 4, 667, 674).

In general, a diocesan bishop has a limited authority over "sui iuris" houses. They are similar to institutes of pontifical

right. The local superior (prior, prioress, abbot, abbess) of a "sui iuris" house is by law a major superior (CIC 613.2; CCEO 418.1). An associated or incorporated "sui iuris" house has other major superiors above the local major superior. An isolated or standing-alone "sui iuris" house has no higher major superior (CIC 615).

CIC attributes some special competencies to a diocesan bishop in the case of a "sui iuris" house of nuns, and that too specially in the case of "sui iuris" houses standing alone, as said in CIC 615.

For the erection of a "sui iuris" house, a written consent of the diocesan bishop is necessary, as is the case for the foundation of any religious house in a diocese (cf CIC 609.1; CCEO 435 1, 436 2). For the erection of a "sui iuris" house of nuns, permission of the Apostolic See is also needed (CIC 609.2).

The diocesan bishop has the right to enter the cloister of nuns located in his diocese, and, with the permission of the superior, to allow others to enter it for a just reason For a just reason and for the truly necessary period of time the bishop, with the consent of the superior, may also allow the nuns to leave the cloister (CIC 667 4, CCEO 477, 478)

The diocesan bishop/local ordinary, after consulting the community of nuns, has to approve the ordinary confessors for the nuns (CIC 630.3, CCEO 475 1).

The diocesan bishop should have a special vigilance over the "sui iuris" houses 'standing alone' (isolated convents). He has to preside over a elections in such convents (CIC 625.2; CCEO 443.1). He has the right and duty to make the canonical visitation of these convents, even with regard to their religious discipline (CIC 628.2, n 1; CCEO 415 2) This type of convent has to render an annual account of the administration to the bishop/local ordinary (CIC 637) It is the diocesan bishop/local ordinary who has to give written permission for the alienation of property and all similar transactions under the provision of CIC 638.1-3 (CIC 638 4) The dispensation from temporary profession and the indult of departure from the convent of c.615 during the period of temporary profession are validly given by the superior with the consent of the council only with the confirmation of the diocesan bishop (CIC 688.2, CCEO 496.2).

An indult of exclaustration for cloistered nuns of all types can be granted only by the Apostolic See (CIC 686.2; CCEO

492.2). For the dismissal of a religious of a convent under c. 615, the final decision pertains to the diocesan bishop, to whom the superior has to submit the acts of dismissal examined by her council (CIC 699.2; CCEO 497.2, 498.2; 499). However, such a decree of dismissal has to be confirmed by the Apostolic See (CIC 700).

Comparative list of the canons concerning the relations between the Bishop and the Religious of Sui Iuris Houses.

CIC	CCEO
613-615	433-436
613 2	418 1
609 1	435 1, 436 2
609 2	.
667 4	477, 478
630 3	475 1
625 2	443 1
628 2.n 1	415 2
637	
638 4	
688 2	496 2
686 2	492.2
699 2	497 2, 498 2, 499
700	

IV.4 The Diocesan Bishop and the Religious Institutes of Diocesan Right

An institute of diocesan right is one which has been erected through the approval of a diocesan bishop, and which, after having been so erected, has not been raised to the pontifical right through a decree of approval by the Apostolic See (CIC 589; CCEO 413, 505) A diocesan bishop can erect an institute of consecrated life by a formal decree, provided the Apostolic See has been consulted (CIC 579; CCEO 435 1, 506, 556).

The basic norm is that a religious institute of diocesan right remains "sub speciali cura episcopi dioecesani" (CIC 594, CCEO 413, 414). However, the bishop should not consider himself as the superior of the institute, and he should not interfere in its internal autonomy (CIC 586) For, once approved and erected, the institute has its own autonomy in keeping with its Constitutions (and the universal laws of the Church).

In speaking about the competence of the diocesan bishop in relation to an institute of diocesan right, the Code distinguishes between the diocesan bishop of the principal seat and other

bishops to whose territories the institute is spread out (CIC 595; CCEO 414.3).

It is the competence of the diocesan bishop of the principal seat (generalate) to approve the Constitutions or the modifications introduced into them, to deal with the matters of major concern which relate to the whole institute and which exceed the power of internal authority. If the institute is spread to other diocese/s, in these matters he has to consult the other bishop/s too (CIC 595.1; CCEO 414.3). The bishop of the principal seat presides over the elections of the supreme moderator of the institute (CIC 625.2, 631.1; CCEO 443.1, 515).

Every diocesan bishop in whose territory the house of the institute of diocesan right is situated has the power in the following cases:

(a) He can grant the members of the house dispensations from the Constitutions in particular cases (not general dispensations) (CIC 595.2; CCEO 414.1.n.2).

(b) He has the right and duty to visit, even with respect to internal and external religious discipline, every and all the houses of the institute situated in the diocese (CIC 628.2.n.2; CCEO 414.1.n.3; 413; 420.3).

(c) A house of the institute is obliged to render the annual account and report of its finances and administration to the diocesan bishop/local Ordinary (CIC 637; CCEO 425).

(d) A written consent of the diocesan bishop/local Ordinary is an added requirement for the institute (CIC 638.4) for a valid alienation of goods or for any other economic transaction in which the patrimonial condition of the house/province can be adversely affected, or if such a transaction exceeds the maximum sum fixed by the Apostolic See or Episcopal Conference of the region (CIC 1292), or if the thing in question was given to the Church in virtue of a vow, or is a precious object of art or historically valuable (CIC 638 1-3; CCEO 1036, 1038).

(e) It is reserved to the diocesan bishop to grant the indult of exclaustration to the members for more than three years (CIC 686.1; CCEO 478, 489.2, 548).

(f) The diocesan bishop has the power to impose or enforce exclaustration, for a grave reason (CIC 686.3), on a member, at the request of the supreme moderator with the consent of the council, whether the member consents, or opposes, or is indifferent to such a decree (CIC 686.3; CCEO 478, 489, 548).

(g) It is the right of the diocesan bishop too to grant the indult of leaving the religious institute to a member after the perpetual profession, when requested through the supreme moderator of the institute The bishop is that of the diocese in which the house where the petitioning religious resides is located (CIC 691.2; CCEO 549.2 n.2).

(h) For the validity of a decree of dismissal of the religious from the institute of diocesan right, it is necessary that it be confirmed by the bishop of the place where the house to which the dismissed religious is assigned is situated (CIC 700; CCEO 497 2, 551)

Comparative list of the canons concerning the relations between the Bishop and the Religious of Diocesan right:

CIC	CCEO
579	435 1, 506, 556
589	413, 505
594	413, 414
595	414 3
625 2, 631 1	443 1, 515
595 2	414 1 n 2
628 2 n 2	414 2 n 3, 413, 420 3
637	425
638	1036, 1038
686	478, 489, 548
691 2	549 2 n 2
700	497 2, 551

IV.5. Religious institute of Patriarchal Right

This type of religious institute (monastery, order, congregation) exists in oriental churches A monastery is of patriarchal right if it is a stauropegial one A stauropegial monastery is a monastery immediately subject to the patriarch. The greek word "stauropegia" refers to the ancient rite of the dedication and blessing of a monastery by fixing (*pignumi*) a cross (*stauros*) at the site of the future altar The term later came to be reserved to monasteries under direct patriarchal control (CCEO 434, 486). An order is of patriarchal right if it has not obtained the decree of recognition from the Apostolic See (CCEO 505 1) A Congregation is of patriarchal right if, erected by the patriarch or recognized as such by his decree, it has not obtained a decree of recognition from the Apostolic See (CCEO 505.2.n.2).

According to CCEO 413, religious institutes are subject with respect to internal rule and religious discipline, unless law provides otherwise, directly and exclusively to the Apostolic See if they are of pontifical right; if they are of patriarchal or eparchial right, they are directly subject to the Patriarch or eparchial bishop, with due regard for can. 418.2. "Under the designation of superior of monks and other religious does not come either the local hierarch or the patriarch, without prejudice to the canons which assign power over them to the patriarch or to the local hierarch." (C.418.2).

The concrete instances of patriarchal power in relation to Monasteries, Orders, Congregations of patriarchal right are given in CCEO 414.2, 435, 438, 480; 486, 487.3, 496.2; 499, 500.4, 501.3, 505, 506, 507 2, 509; 510; 544.1, 549.2.n.1, 551; 553.

(to be concluded)

Correspondence

The Mission of Jesus

Sir,

In his contribution " The Religious and Mission" (Dec '93 issue), Fr M. Amaladoss gives us only a partial description of the mission of Jesus since he restricts it to the proclamation of the Reign of God and a call to conversion Fr Amaladoss writes "The mission of Jesus was the proclamation of the Reign of God and a call to conversion "

In fact the mission of Jesus was to be the Messiah, who not only proclaimed the Reign of God with the call to conversion, but also inaugurated that same reign of God with His Paschal Mystery (Mk 8. 29) He is the first fruits of the Kingdom and its very source (Col 1 18).

Fr Amaladoss deduces various important lessons from his partial description of the mission of Jesus. However the full and complete understanding of Christ's mission as Messiah and Son of the living God made man, points to the urge to proclaim Him to humanity which longs for Him The heart and goal of the Christian mission is to proclaim Jesus *the Saviour and to strive to build up the People of God* (faith communities) and not ONLY human or humane communities This seems to me the whole tenor of our Christian faith as handed to us in the Church and in the whole New Testament

Yours sincerely,

CTC, Torai PO,
Pakur 816 107
Sahibganj Dt., Bihar

P. AQUILINA, S.J.

VJTR [illegible]-116

Religion and the Metaphysics of the One

John SAHADAT

This review article is based on the book *Religion and the One*, which contains the Gifford lectures delivered by Frederick Copleston, S J, 1979 and 1980, at the University of Aberdeen The article discusses Copleston's exploration of the human search for the ultimate reality in the philosophical and in the religious traditions of the world, and presents *Religion and the One* as a challenging intellectual basis for cross-cultural dialogue John Sahadat is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Sudbury College in Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, P3E 2C6

I

The modern age of advanced science and technology is sceptical about metaphysics, mysticism and the absolute reality of religion Human intuition, however, defies such scepticism on the basis of an experience which gives the *seeker* an awareness of reality that is not subject to categories of thought, nor to the principle of verification, nor to comparison with empirical phenomena The reason for this is that the experience itself is transnotional, transmundane and transsensual Though the sceptic may press his contention that the seeker is comparable to a blind man searching in a dark room for a black cat, the seeker will emphatically assert that he/she is not looking in a dark room for a black cat *that is not there* Neither the *silence* of the Buddha or Thomas Aquinas, nor the *neti* of the Advaitin, nor the *nada* of St John of the Cross, nor the *sunyatā* of Nagarjuna suggest an existential vacuum or nihilism If this was the case, the great traditions of the world would be nothing more than morbid custodians of pessimism and despair Rather, such terms are ideograms for the absolute reality which continuously negates predicates The Buddha responded in silence to the sceptics who challenged him with a series of questions, but on leaving his challengers he issued an invitation to them· *ehi passiko*, "come and see" — with all its metaphysical, religious and mystical ramifications When Thomas Aquinas broke his silence after a long winter, he declared that all that he had written was like straw in relation to what he had experienced

The human intuition completes and fulfils the search of the rational mind by taking the seeker beyond the boundaries of reason and

beyond the threshold of the metaphenomenal/non-rational. Plato had considered the *nous* as the crown of the rational mind and as the doorway to the *ideas*. Plotinus, the Neo-Platonist, in a letter to Flaccus, speaks of three levels of knowledge — opinion, science, illumination. The way of the first is sense, of the second dialectic, and of the third intuition And he concludes that he subordinates reason to intuition. In the fifth *Ennead*, Plotinus explains the human capacity for an experience of union with the ultimate *One/Principle* In its communication of clear, distinct and non-contradictory propositions reason must, by virtue of its own powers of perception, recognize its limitations, as Aquinas points out, *it should not become the assassin of intuition*

The Madhyamika takes a more radical approach with regard to the knowability of reality through discursive reasoning. Its dialectic is an unqualified rejection of all philosophical views, seen as distorted statements about reality, because for the Madhyamika there is no philosophical position that is not bifurcatory and which does not suffer from an inherent dogmatism that is grounded in the nature of reason and in the rational process itself, hence *drstivâda*

The questions of *whence, why,* and *whither* of humankind and the universe have challenged the human mind from its earliest period of experience and reflection. From experience and reflection there developed a wide variety of cosmogonic and hero/saviour myths from which philosophy and theology seek to decipher truths and insights about the absolute reality The human mind in its search for ultimate answers to ultimate questions is inclined towards a metaphysics of the *One* in the traditions of the East and the West Contemplation, revelation and philosophical reflection are indicative of some of the approaches to the ultimate reality

An exploratory study of these issues in one volume is no easy task. Under the title of *Religion and the One,* the eminent Jesuit historian of philosophy, Professor Frederick Copleston, faced this enormous challenge *Religion and the One* is the publication of Copleston's Gifford lectures given in 1979 and 1980 at the University of Aberdeen[1] Copleston writes in the same cogent and lucid manner that is so characteristic of his well-known nine volumes of *A History of Philosophy,* and covers a wide range of data to show that the quest of the human mind for ultimate reality is not restricted to any particular tradition but is universal, and that peoples of the East and the West have developed various theories and approaches in their search for the Ultimate Copleston's exploration of these theories and approaches is historical and phenomenological, without preconceived models for value judgment But his empathy does not dull his sense of objectivity nor does it affect his scholarly acumen He leads his readers through a plethora of cross-cultural data giving a sense of the mind's aspiration for the One through metaphysical speculation, on the one hand, and an apprecia-

1. New York. The Crossroads Publishing Co., 1982.

tion of revelation and of the perception of the One in the mystical and religious traditions, on the other. Throughout the book, Copleston maintains a guarded scholarly caution. He does not play down the role of metaphysics, mysticism or religion in knowing reality, but neither does he exaggerate the status of scientific investigation. He does, however, perceive that any metaphysics of the One is the expression of the mind tending "towards an elusive goal," an attempt to speak about that which eludes language and the categories of thought.

II

Whereas it is possible to have rational discussions on the various theories of the One, as postulated by philosophers of East and West, metaphysics is limited in its goal to pinpoint the ultimate reality in a conceptual structure. The more this is realised, the wider and clearer is the way for religion to offer reality through divine revelation with an invitation to respond in faith. Although Copleston does not consider the metaphysics of the One to be a *religion* in the strict sense of the term, he contends that it can either be in close association with a religion or have strong religious and ethical overtones. The Advaita Vedanta and Taoism are classic examples. In the Advaita system, the religious, mystical and metaphysical are interwoven, and they fall within the scope of Hinduism. But an exploration of the metaphysics of the One in Taoism shows it not to be associated with any religion. However, there can be found in it religious, mystical and ethical elements: for example, the Taoist exhortation to practice *wu wei*, the abandonment of the selfish ego as a fundamental prerequisite for harmony with the Tao, is indeed the path to liberation. The religious, mystical and ethical implications of this pursuit are explicit. It is clear that Copleston's perception of *religion* expands beyond narrow/orthodox boundaries.

In the application of its dialectic the Madhyamika system pushes the metaphysical dimension of the *via negativa* to such extremes that it claims to be left with nothing but *drstivāda* and *sunyatā*. But *sunyatā* is not nihilism and, whether Nagarjuna approved or not, the Madhyamika system postulated an Absolute, the One. The intent of Buddhism is the liberation of the human being from ignorance/suffering into *nirvana*. According to the Madhyamika, intuition is *prajñā* — liberating, non-dual knowledge. It is salvific knowledge that enables the aspirant to make the existential passage from the predicament of *pratītyasamutpāda* to *sunyatā*. The Madhyamika system of philosophy "is internal to Buddhism as a religion" (p. 56), and although its emphasis is on philosophical reflection and self-criticism, it is rooted in the fundamentals of the twofold concern of Buddhism: *suffering* and its *cure*.

Even in Zen Buddhism Copleston finds traces of the metaphysics of the One. Zen is directed towards the realization of one's real nature which is identified with the Buddha-nature. The Buddha-nature is the ultimate reality and it is said to be present in all sentient creatures. Zen

rules out all propositions about the Buddha-nature, with regard to its existence or non-existence or both or neither, as incorrect. Thus to state that the Buddha-nature is a collective name for all or some phenomena, or not a collective name for all or some phenomena, is incorrect. The Zen vision is unifying, so that all dualities are dissolved and the experience of *oneness* prevails as the experiencer merges into the Buddha-nature Copleston writes:

> Zen not only provides a unifying vision of the world but it also unifies a person's life in the sense that daily actions are performed in a different spirit If, however, we take a narrower view of religion and demand belief in a transcendent reality, whether it is described as personal or as suprapersonal, the Zen conception of reality would not count as religious (p 65)

Copleston observes that there are some Zen masters who regard the Buddha-nature with a reverence that is akin to the religious More-over, Zen is a simplified version of Mahayana Buddhism, and Buddhism is a religion

In exploring the development of philosophic thought in the Islamic world, especially in Persia, Copleston unravels the very close link between philosophy, revealed religion and mystical spirituality. In Islam the Koran reveals that Allah is the ultimate reality and all beings are ontologically dependent upon Him, but He is not dependent on anything or anyone. Allah is transcendent, but also immanent in so far as He is omnipresent Islam's emphasis on Allah's transcendence explains to some extent why some Muslims have looked upon mysticism with a degree of doubt and suspicion Aspirations for an experience of union with Allah are seen by some as a threat to the fundamental distinction Islam makes between Allah, the Creator, and his creatures, between the eternal and transcendent God and the world of the Many; but Copleston shows that, in spite of critics, mystical spirituality finds roots in Islam itself For example, the Koran declares that "love is due to Allah" and that Allah is closer to the human individual "than the vein of one's neck" (p. 98) Copleston traces the rise and spread of Islamic mystical spirituality and contends that it was not a foreign import. He writes

> On the contrary, this spirituality characterized by the love of God and the desire to realize the divine presence, was a native growth, acting as a complement to exoteric Islam, the profession of faith and the observance of law (p 99)

Copleston, however, is not as concerned with the nature of mystical spirituality as he is with its influence on, and its relation to, Islamic philosophy, and it is in this direction that he develops his arguments. He refers to al-Ghazâlî, the mystic of Persian origin who attempted to combine a Neoplatonistic metaphysics "with a doctrine of mystical spirituality which did not involve the claim that the human soul or spirit was identical with God" (p. 101) al-Ghazâlî steered clear of all

monistic trappings and spoke of mystical union as being analogous to the nuptial union. He sought to develop a philosophy compatible to the teachings of the Koran, and to preserve the transcendence of God with His immanence intact, and to demonstrate that all creatures depend for their existence upon God, who is present and active everywhere. Under the direct influence of Neoplatonism, al-Ghazâlî

> represented God, the One, as absolute Light and the different levels of created being as corresponding to divine degrees of reflected luminosity The human soul, attracted by the Light, can move upwards towards it, though it can never become the absolute light, in the sense of being ontologically identical with it (p 103)

The idea of the One as transcending all categories of thought is well established in the metaphysical systems of the past It is present in Neoplatonism, which is a significant part of the background within which Islamic philosophy developed Like al-Ghazâlî, Ibn Arabî was also influenced by Neoplatonism He applied the metaphysics of Neoplatonism as "mediated by Avicenna" to propound a theory of a hierarchical order of being in which the One was featured as transcending all the categories of reason

Concerned about illustrating the close connection between philosophy and mystical spirituality, Copleston gives a close attention to Sufi spirituality He makes the appropriate clarification that Sufism was not a philosophical movement When it gave literary expression to its spirituality it did so through the medium of poetry In spite of this, we cannot lose sight of the fact that Sufism did have its doctrinal assumptions and implications Copleston expresses them as follows

> Desire for union with God, awareness of the divine omnipresence, detachment from all except God, has implications in regard to the nature of reality and the nature of the human being We are justified in claiming that Sufism gave itself, so to speak, a metaphysics and a cosmology, not in the sense that all Sufis pursued or even valued philosophy, but in the sense that some thinkers, such as al-Ghazâlî, developed a religiously oriented interpretation of reality in the light of Sufi ideals (p 113)

The arguments used were adopted from the wealth of Greek philosophy, but the functions given to them were directly inspired by the mystical spirituality of Sufism In the case of Mullâ Sadrâ, the vision of God in *all* and *all* in God "required a spiritual illumination for which philosophical reflection could only prepare the way" Copleston contends that "the theoretical work presupposed Sufi spirituality, and it was intended to confirm and strengthen it, to have a practical result" (p 113)

The attraction to pantheism was counterbalanced by allegiance to Islamic orthodoxy and by Sufi mystical spirituality which emphasized a relationship between the soul and God based on love. This relationship is well represented in the poetic expressions of several Sufis and it

significantly influenced the pattern of thought from al-Ghazālī onwards. The Sufi's claim to *relationship* played an important role in the preservation of the basic Islamic theistic doctrine The idea that God takes the initiative out of love in seeking the human being militates against and contradicts the monistic tones of Abū Yazīd al-Bastāmī and al-Hallāj It leaves no room for accommodating the idea that the human soul is ontologically identical with God The Sufi's emphasis on relationship kept the Islamic emphasis on the divine transcendence intact, but at the same time it combined it with the divine immanence One of the fundamental concerns of inspired Sufi thinkers was precisely to counterbalance the transcendence of God with his immanence Mullā Sadrā and Pahlawi philosophers like Sabzawārī pursued philosophical reflection to clarify and systematize their conception of reality and to explain how pure being could simultaneously be One and Many Copleston is not reluctant to point out that these efforts are not devoid of ambiguities, nor can they escape the blame of suggesting a kind of "dynamic pantheism" which militates against Islamic belief in the transcendence of God Copleston is inclined to think that poetry is a more appropriate means than analytic philosophy for expressing the mystical vision of reality

Sufism has grown out of a tradition with unique beliefs, customs and presuppositions Any attempt to uproot it from its indigenous milieux inevitably leads to distortion and misunderstanding The brand of philosophy developed in Persia is primarily an Islamic phenomenon It developed within Islam, on the basis of Muslim beliefs, and can only be properly understood in the light of the historical framework of Islam Outside influences on Islamic philosophy cannot be denied, but they were absorbed and given an Islamic flavour as far as was possible

With regard to the development of the metaphysics of the One with religious and mystical overtones, Copleston gives as a striking example the philosophy of Plotinus The Plotinian doctrine is that the human spirit can make its return to the One through a process that culminates in the mystical experience It is an experience that Plotinus himself had on more than one occasion Although some are reluctant to refer to Plotinus' philosophy of the One as 'religious', Copleston points out that

> the thought of Plotinus, nonetheless, provides what can perfectly well be described as a religious vision of reality, together with a religiously oriented account of the goal of human life and a positive evaluation of mystical experience as contact with the One (p 124)

Although it is difficult to assess the extent to which Plotinian thought was influenced by myr'ical experience, we know for certain that the general structure of his philosophical framework developed from the background of Platonic thought and Hellenistic philosophy and not

from a religious background. Philosophy comprised the path "to a religiously oriented vision of reality" in the case of Plotinus. Unlike the Advaitins and the Sufis, he could not seek guidance for, or verification of, his experiences on the basis of sacred scriptures, for these were not available to him in his tradition

The situation in medieval Christendom was different when compared to that of Plotinus and the Greek tradition, in so far as in medieval Christendom there was the Church which was considered the authoritative instructor of religious and moral truths In the Middle Ages a sharp distinction was made between philosophy and Christian theology Whereas the premises of philosophy were taken as propositions whose truth was known through the human intellect, the premises of theology were regarded as the revealed truths of God Consequently, people did not look to philosophy but to theology as propounded by the Church for a vision of reality and for moral guidance. Copleston writes

> People in general obviously looked to the Church and to Christian theology for saving wisdom, not to philosophy in the sense in which philosophy was regarded as a distinct discipline
>
> If one asserted that in the Middle Ages philosophy was not religiously oriented in any sense, the assertion would be false For one thing, philosophy, as a subject taught in universities, was studied before theology, which was then regarded as the highest of the sciences Its study constituted a preparatory stage in the academic career For another thing, most of the creative thinkers of medieval Christendom were primarily theologians and were naturally concerned to integrate philosophy with theology in a systematic manner (p 126)

In the case of Meister Eckhart, his vision of the One and its relation to the Many was influenced by a mystical experience His declaration that "all creatures are pure nothing" and "outside of God there is nothing" shows some similarity to Eastern mysticism, and his teachings about the One and the Many are reflections of a mystical spirituality In the case of Ruysbroeck, his teachings too are not only the reflection of the influence of Neoplatonist metaphysics, but also of his personal mystical experience The metaphysics of the One and the Many was a major factor in medieval philosophy It was believed that the Many could not be meaningfully explained without reference to the One as ultimate reality Copleston notes that in spite of the mystical spirituality, in the Middle Ages "philosophical discussion was conducted through a process of argument and counter-argument, and not by appeals to mystical insight" (p 130) God/Reality was the subject-matter of both philosophy and theology in the Middle Ages, as it is in modern times. For example, Hegel makes the assertion that philosophy and religion have a common subject-manner which is "God and nothing but God and the self-unfolding of God" (p 131). Copleston

does not intend to make Hegel into a mystic, as Richard Kroner has described him, but he demonstrates that there is a connection "between mysticism and Hegel's view of the relationship between philosophy and religion" (pp. 131-35).

Mystical experience is a universal phenomenon which has made its philosophical and religious impact in both the eastern and western traditions. The philosopher reflects on religious data including the mystical phenomenon and attempts to assess their relevance for the human being in the empirical world. The philosopher may follow a methodology that restricts him to an analytic study and reflection on the phenomena, but Copleston points out that

> unless he [the philosopher] regards Husserl's suspension of judgment in regard to existence as setting an absolute limit to thought, he is unlikely to avoid some sort of metaphysics, even if he disclaims any ability to develop a science of supersensible reality Metaphysics of some sort or other is a natural development of human thought, and I do not think that it can ever be entirely eliminated (p 146)

Copleston contends that Christian theologians are fully entitled to make value judgments about metaphysics from their own standpoint, however, in spite of their judgments and criticism, Copleston believes that the "phenomena that give rise to metaphysics are still there." Metaphysics is not distinct from, but is part of philosophy It learns from and is conditioned by philosophy's self-reflection and self-criticism, and even though philosophy may seem to limit the scope of what it thinks it can achieve, metaphysics will never "commit suicide and disappear" (p 147) Copleston, of course, does not claim that metaphysics is the *sine qua non* for a vision of reality In spite of the fact that he argues that it is possible to have rational discourses of diverse theories of the One, he does not lose sight of the limitations of metaphysics when it seeks to grasp the ultimate reality in a conceptual framework Copleston contends that in the history of Christianity there have been doubts about the role of metaphysics But there can be no doubt that religion and mysticism have been enriched to some extent by the *attempt* of metaphysics to unravel and clarify truths pertaining to the nature of the One independently of divine revelation. It should be noted, however, that religion and mysticism have not been served faithfully by metaphysics, especially when its *attempts* resulted in conclusions that "blurred" the content of revelation.

Having considered various views on the existence of the One, Copleston makes a thorough examination of the relation between the metaphysics of the One and social, ethical activism. Generally speaking, philosophers incorporated within their thought moral pronouncements as a guideline for the attainment of the highest goal. Moral philosophy as such was part of a greater whole that included metaphysics and cosmology, as well as psychological or epistemological

themes Copleston observes.

> When moral philosophy formed part of a complex whole, a philosophical system or a world-view, we would naturally expect to find some interaction, or interrelations, between the different parts (p 222)

Today, in the absence of such interrelations, we do not deal with the question of a coherent system or world-view, but with "a juxtaposition of separate disciplines" To delineate these interrelations Copleston examines the various philosophies discussed above, carefully avoiding any prejudicial and exclusivistic treatment of a particular system. He carefully demonstrates how the interrelatedness between the metaphysics of the One and the pronouncements on ethical and social activism can be interwoven (pp 223-40) To his great credit, he makes a very timely and significant clarification with regard to the Advaita Vedanta, which has been criticized for discouraging and inhibiting social ideals and activism Copleston makes it clear that the ethical doctrine features in Advaita philosophy, this indicates to its critics that ethics and social activism have an important function in spite of the fact that the Advaita Vedanta perceives the Absolute as transcending good and evil There is no question but that the precept and practice of moral purification had profound meaning and value even for Samkara, the Advaitin *par excellence*, as well as for others Although the world of plurality is regarded as only relatively real since it is only an appearance of Brahman, it is the world which human beings inhabit until such time as they attain liberation In such a world human beings are expected to perform duties Samkara did not intend to promote a doctrine of inaction and quietism, but a guide for liberation as the highest goal in the human quest For good causes the individual should not adopt an attitude of aloofness Even the enlightened should perform actions for the welfare of others It is not a matter of renunciation *of* action but renunciation *in* action Renunciation *in* action is the attitude in the performance of action which is qualitatively different from the ordinary performance of action Renunciation *in* action means that the acting agent renounces the selfish ego and all desires for rewards Copleston writes

> It would be unfair to describe the Advaitin ethics as being simply self-centred As all selves were regarded as ultimately one with Brahman and so with one another, benevolence towards others in the world of plurality was naturally demanded (p 234)

Indeed, the moral dimension of the Advaita system cannot be realistically denied However, Copleston observes that directing one's moral living towards the attainment of self-realization means an existential thrust beyond good and evil, towards an absorption into Brahman Such a moral philosophy cannot stimulate much zeal and enthusiasm for social activism in the world of plurality which is ultimately only an appearance of Brahman It follows, then, that the metaphysics

of the Advaita Vedanta promotes ethical ideals whose emphasis is on moral purification in preparation for liberation, hence its concern is primarily with internal purification rather than the transformation of society This is understandable in so far as it is in keeping with the logistics of monistic metaphysics In theism the orientation of ethics towards social activism is well defined and there can be no question that it presents a more appealing rationale for social involvement than monism In this regard Copleston examines the theistic position of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, giving a brief comparison between monism and theism with reference to their appeal, to ethical ideals and social activism and its limitations (pp 222-40)

Copleston finally turns to some critical comments on metaphysics, showing how the systems of Descartes, Spinoza and Fichte, for example, have fallen short of putting an end to the successive developments of philosophical systems and metaphysical theories simply because they have not been able to fulfil the human quest (pp 261-68) He does not deny that we can learn something of importance from each of these systems, but he unravels their flaws and weaknesses and shows how incapable each is of attaining the truth He is not inclined, however, to dismiss metaphysics as irrelevant to the pursuit of truth. Throughout his arguments in this book he avoids reducing religion to a metaphysical system, or God to the metaphysical concept of the One Despite the fact that he has shown how the mind strives to move towards the One in metaphysical speculation and how this can have certain religious ramifications, he also argues vigorously to demonstrate the limitations and incompetence of metaphysics to grasp truth/reality (pp 269-70) He contends, however, that a metaphysics which pursues a comprehensive concept of reality, and which acknowledges its limits and leaves scope for divine revelation, is not necessarily hostile to theistic religion

The rise of successive philosophical systems is an indication of the incapability of *any one* of them to fully satisfy the human quest. In this regard Copleston recalls Kant's observation that "the succession of systems of world-views was a sure sign of the failure of what he called dogmatic metaphysics" (p 248) Such being the case, doubts arise in every system regardless of the tradition of its origin Copleston writes.

> Philosophy arises as an attempt to overcome such doubt, and to substitute for threatened traditional beliefs a rationally grounded system of ideas Any such system of ideas, however, the philosophy of Plato for example, will be conditioned by, and to this extent relative to, the historical situation in which it arises Sooner or later it will itself be subjected to criticism and doubt It does not follow that world-views have no vital function to perform But even if a philosopher produces a world-view which satisfies the needs of his contemporaries, he can hardly reproduce one which will satisfy the needs of people living in another and different

historical situation. We can, therefore, expect to find a succession of world views (p. 249).

III

The main theme of this book is religion and the metaphysics of the One. It should be noted that Copleston does not intend to place religion and metaphysics on the same plane or to reduce the concept of God to the concept of the One Throughout this work he argues consistently and persuasively, with close reference to the eastern and western traditions, to show that the movement of the mind in the process of metaphysical speculation towards the One can undoubtedly have profound religious implications Simultaneously he points out the limitations of metaphysics to comprehend and describe a reality that transcends the categories of reason

When the concept of the One is considered by itself it suggests ideas such as the indescribable One of Taoism, the Emptines or Void of Mahayana Buddhism, Mansel's Unconditioned, Spencer's Unknowable and Jasper's Comprehensive Such ideas, Copleston observes, appeal to those who are mystically inclined However, he reminds his readers that these ideas suggest a note of agnosticism which is not present in the great Semitic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, for the God of the Bible and the Koran is not a God to whom no attributes can be ascribed and of whom nothing can be said except that He is One The monotheistic traditions unanimously proclaim the exclusive oneness of God but, in addition, much more is said of Him as the Supreme, Loving, Personal Creator One can worship this God while seeking to establish a relationship with Him, but one cannot worship or seek to have a personal relationship with an impersonal Absolute, the One of metaphysics

Religion and the One can serve as an excellent basis for dialogue between the religious, or mystical and the philosophical traditions with regard to the human quest to know the ultimate reality and the desire to express this *knowledge* within a satisfactory conceptual framework. Copleston has traced the human aspiration for the Ultimate in the traditions of the world, and has shown how the religious, the mystical, the philosophical and the ethical converge at certain points within a tradition Thus, the human quest bridges the gap between East and West and puts every *seeker* on a common existential ground Though the approaches may be non-homogeneous, the quest is homogeneous and Copleston has sensitized his readers to the challenge of looking at another's tradition with the same intellectual passion that they would their own. He forces the western philosophical and religious consciousness out of its parochialism into dialogical possibilities when he explores the philosophical and religious consciousness of non-western traditions ●

VJTR 58 (1994) 117-121

Listen to the Spirit

"A Woman Welcomed Him in Her Home" (Lk 10:38)

March 8th. International Women's Day

The place of women in our society has become a central concern during this century. March 8th has been established as the International Women's Day The awakening to the age-old discrimination against woman and the rethinking of her personal and social status is important in every nation and culture but, no doubt, has special significance in our country The rejection of girl babies begins even before they are born their birthday may coincide with the date of their death Often it accompanies them through the years of childhood where they are trained for a subordinate role in family and society The rising tide of violence and ruthless crime against young wives has shocked the world and tarnished the image of India Besides the crime that arouses indignation, there is the fate of millions who are condemned to a life of humiliating inferiority and exploitation which is almost taken for granted in their families they live under subhuman conditions and in their work they are exploited as unskilled labour in fields and roads and in factories, underpaid, often cheated The Women's Day is meant to make our society more conscious of these and other injustices and discriminations against women

The day has also a religious significance Throughout history in many cultures, including India, the life and status of women have been explained, legitimized and supported on religious grounds. The Sacred Books of Hindus are quoted to justify their subordinate position The Bible is also blamed for attributing to women a status of inferiority, a position which is inherited from the Old Testament and which women have not been able to shake off even today their position in the Church is still inferior to that of men.

It may be helpful and revealing to take a closer look at the biblical understanding of the relation of man and woman It is clear that in Israel, in tune with the entire cultural and social tradition of the ancient Middle East, women were subordinate to men The Bible reflects a man-centred society with discriminating features against women:

e.g., a man can divorce his wife, she cannot divorce her husband, a man can have more wives, she is bound to one man, her adultery is cruelly avenged, the man goes free. Still, the image of the woman in the Bible is different from that in the surrounding world which McKenzie describes as an "embodiment of sexuality and fertility in the contemporary myths and rituals," where woman was divinized not on account of personal dignity but as symbol of fertility

The oldest biblical account, coming from the Yahwist, stands in contrast to this "degradation of women" and describes "the true nature of woman and her true relationship to the man (as) the 'helper meet for man', his partner and, in the context of the story, his equal She is made to share his life and not merely his sexual experience (The text) is a strong and noble rejection of the frightful overemphasis upon sex and sexual pleasure which cursed the ancient world" (John McKenzie, *The Two-Edged Sword*, Milwaukee Bruce Publishing Co, 1956, pp 95-6) The Yahwist who wrote the earliest creation account knew of the actual subordination of women among his people He did not try to correct it He explained it not as part of the woman's nature, and therefore unchangeable, but as the consequence of sin (Gen 3 16) The consequence of this biblical position would be that in a redeemed world the subordination of women has no place any more, neither in society nor in the Church

The equal status of man and woman, however, means more than equal rights It implies that in actual human life, in personal relations and in human culture, the contribution of woman as woman, different as she is from man, is of equal importance as that of man Only in mutual complementarity of man and woman can a full human life and true culture develop This equality is expressed in a unique manner in the much later text of Gen 1 27 "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" Thus in a spiritual reflection on the place of women in society and the Church, we ought not to stop in questions of redressing injustices against women and working for their equal legal status (however important this is) Likewise, when reassessing the place of women in the Church we should not think only of their public recognition, their share in the higher levels of Church structures reserved to the clergy, and in particular of the question of their ordination as priests More important seems the underlying question about the specific contribution of women as women to the life and mission of the Church

The image of the Church is masculine Not only is the liturgical worship carried out exclusively by the clergy, but the entire decision making body of the Church, the sphere of jurisdiction, belongs to men. And yet, from the beginning the feminine nature of the Church was recognized In the Old Testament Israel was seen as the *bride* chosen by Yahweh in never-failing love Paul uses the same symbol for the Church in Corinth "I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might

present you as a pure virgin to him" (2 Cor 11:2; cf. Eph 5:25-32). Early Patrology has seen the mystery of Mary, Virgin and Mother, totally given to God in the work of human salvation, realized and continued in the Church. The Council has taken up the ancient analogy of Mary as model of the Church (LG 63ff). The whole Council text on Mary has been added to the Constitution of the Church not as an appendix but as a complementary image of the Church all its structures and activities, its entire body, is made up of the community of believers who, in continuation of Mary's response to the angelic message, is involved in and committed to the service of human salvation

The decision to incorporate the text on Mary in the Constitution of the Church has been hailed as providential Ratzinger called it a "watershed" decision· Mary must not be seen as a heavenly vision removed from earthly realities but as a woman in her earthly life of faith and service of the Lord, bearing the child, giving him human life in our world, inseparably linked with his saving mission This very vocation of giving to the Word of God a human presence on earth is the task of the Church But in reality most of the Church's work in organisation and apostolic activity, and in the systematic unfolding of her message, is done on masculine lines Yet, the life and mission of the Church also today has its model in Mary

It may be helpful to exemplify such general reflections in more concrete ways For centuries the official theology of the schools has been taught and written by men, it is sanctioned by the Magisterium which is totally masculine The merits of this work are in no way questioned But as a consequence, the intellectual and systematic exposition of the contents of our faith has widely prevailed over a presentation of faith which is embodied in human life and social realities Theological textbooks can be read — perhaps even written — without personal involvement Faith, which is the personal response to God's total self-gift to us, has often been reduced to a system of doctrines which may be discussed without affecting our life

The thinking of a woman is more intuitive and based on her personal life and human experience This is of particular importance when we deal with the basic realities of human existence, of ultimate concern. Let us listen to a very modern woman, a mystic deeply involved in the betterment of human life, an ardent lover of Christ, Simone Weil — though she never joined the Catholic Church She lived the mystery of Christ in the depth of her heart She accepted the Church teachings as true but knew that no formula can contain the fullness of faith "The symbol of the veil or of the reflected light, used by mystics when they speak about faith, allows them to escape the suffocating imprisonment of a totalitarian conceptualization of faith. The doctrine of the Church remains valid for them not as if it were the truth but to find the truth behind it" Therefore "dogmas must be contemplated from a distance with attentiveness, reverence and love" For her, the Christian faith is

not an attempt to understand things beyond human reason: "Not to reach out for new things but to perceive the simple truths with our whole being, with ever greater patience, effort and method." Such faith becomes a guidance for real life "The object of my search is not the supernatural but this world The supernatural is the light. Don't you dare make it an object· you would degrade it " (Quotations taken from *Orientierung* no 13/14 [15-31 July 1993] pp. 147-152).

This certainly is an approach to the mysteries of our faith very different, yet not in contradiction with the traditional approach. It is truly complementary and very much needed in our own time where people do not care for doctrines but for actual guidance and orientation We could test this approach in every sphere of theology. We try just one example Mary's Immaculate Conception Volumes have been written on it It has been developed in the context of original sin — what is it really? — and Mary as an exception — how is this possible? It had been discussed through the Middle Ages and divided the schools of theologians who called each other heretic — so it became a source of division Could we not try to ask Mary in Nazareth what the "Immaculate Conception" really means? After all she should know! The very word might be puzzling to her, but perhaps she might tell us about her union with God "I know that He loves me, totally, and I could never say 'no' to him " This should be the substance of centuries of controversy She might fail in an exam on Mariology, but every theologian would envy her for the unique personal perception of her life in God's grace Knowledge is more than concepts and data The efforts of theology to spell out the contents of faith should certainly not be brushed aside, but a process of theologizing must never lose contact with the depth of personal faith

As the knowledge of women is complementary to intellectual analysis so has her impact on society its specific features We do need laws, administrative structures and, in modern society, an ever expanding multitude of organized activities All of them are meant to be at the service of life, individual and in community, but they cannot produce life, and all too often life is crushed in the bewildering mechanical processes of bureacracy especially when they are manipulated by vested interests Life is more than organization Our highly organized society has become impersonal, splintered

Woman is closer to life and nature Men build houses, women make homes The woman's role begins with the conception and bearing of the child and preparing its first home in the family, the basis of all community But this unique role of the woman in the family is in no way meant to limit the scope of her work to the domestic sphere We have painfully learnt how much we need the woman's closeness to life and nature in our commercial society and in our social life under the dominance of a technology which destroys our planet We also have learnt that peace cannot be found by insisting on mutual rights

we need sympathy, compassion, reconciliation, the influence of the woman.

All this holds good not only in the secular sphere but even more in the life of the Church The Church is communion before she is institution, the community of forgiven sinners, who in turn learns to forgive, before she exercises authority She must listen to God's word and let it ripen in her heart through contemplation, before she preaches and presents it in dogmas She has no mission to impose anything on people but is sent to invite them to a fellowship of eternal life The Council has realized it anew The Constitution on Revelation opens with an invitation, quoting John's Epistle "We announce to you eternal life that was with the Father and has appeared to us in order that you also may have fellowship with us and that our fellowship may be with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1 2. DV 1)

Not only must better opportunities be offered to women in the Church but the climate must change We need the ecclesial organisation, but the institutional image is harmful The Church must become again the welcoming community in which all recongnize the tangible sacrament of God's healing, reconciling and life-giving love We need a more feminine Church

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Note

Catechetics for Today

Christian Religious Education (Faith-Formation, Catechesis) has been from apostolic times an essential ministry in the Church When it comes to stating its nature, purpose and scope, however, there are wide differences even among catechetical experts Here in India the images associated with "catechism" and "catechist" are products of catechetical fundamentalism which equates Faith-Formation by whatever name with the act of echoing answers to the a-b-c's of Christian belief It is no wonder then that Religious Education has received the "messenger boy treatment" by seminary professors and Church professionals Vatican II, post-conciliar developments and, not least of all, a full-time practising catechetical Pope, John Paul II, see catechesis as that art and science which "puts it all together" when it deals with faithing people The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* shows this sweeping scope in its four divisions of Catholic doctrine, liturgy, morality and prayer life

In this same stream of John XXIII's new pentecost, Thomas Kalathuveettil (TK) introduces India to Thomas Groome (TG)[1], whose

1 **Shared-Praxis as Christian Religious Education. The Catechetical Approach of Thomas H. Groome** By Thomas KALATHUVEETTIL, S D B. Bangalore Kristu

Shared-Praxis approach is judged critically to be certainly the most significant and sophisticated treatment of religious education in the Catholic community (402) One of the few theorists who has taken extraordinary pains to try out in practice what he writes and talks about in theory, TG has thoroughly tested his approach with people of different ages and conditions of life To mention only one instance, TG's *Shared-Praxis* approach is followed by 65-70% of the catechetical texts used today throughout the U.S A He is the primary author of two very popular series, *God With Us* and *Coming To Faith* (Sadlier, N Y, 1988), both of which have double editions, one for schools and the other for parishes (43, 392) TG is crystal clear that Christian Religious Education is a serious, distinct science with its own theory and practice It is not a hodge-podge of psychology, sociology and theology (378) It demands academic seriousness in a body of committed, competent professionals Why is this *Shared-Praxis* approach so effective and so popular? Before answering these questions, something else needs be said

In this doctoral study TK himself manifests patient and scrupulously detailed scholarship in tracing out TG's encyclopedic theory through a kind of pilgrimage of faith seeking understanding in our contemporary, unjust world TK attractively contextualises this journey in the life-experiences of TG, beginning as a boy in Ireland, where he was viewed as something of the village idiot, who learned reading and writing only by the age of eleven years (The remedy for this low achievement was a pair of glasses, for, his poor eyesight did not enable him to read the blackboard!) TK follows him through his first catechetical efforts in a classroom full of high school boys Like most others of his tribe, TG learned how to enfaithen others by walking the Paschal Mystery road painful failures and confrontations reflected on humbly and turned into great learning experiences When he finally gets down to spelling out his *Shared-Praxis* approach as a macro-theory for Christian Religious Education, he does not look upon it as his own creation *ex nihilo* but as a drawing together of many trends and insights that have been evident in Christian Religious Education over the past eighty years (57) In working out its foundations, TG takes what he considers the best in theological, philosophical and educational theory. What is most impressive is TG's critical use of his sources, which, as they are enumerated, read like a *Who's Who* in contemporary Christian thought.

TK himself, as he moves through this interdisciplinary theory, keeps a sharp, critical eye for shifts of positions by TG The reader is kept well informed of key issues and, mercifully, of the meanings given to key technical terms From this it should be clear that this book is not light, fun reading It stretches the mind on practically every page and, at times, taxes the attention by its erudition. Who, therefore, form its readership?

TG considers that this *Shared-Praxis* approach is apt for more effectively carrying on a wide range of ministries, like evangelisation, teaching and doing theology, liturgy, preaching and building basic Christian communities, for justice and peace programmes and pastoral counselling (394, 397) I would add to this list all faith-educators who want to reflect afresh upon key catechetical issues like the nature and purpose of catechesis, language, readiness, revelation in our day-to-day lives, hermeneutics for catechetical action, evaluation of Religious Educational programmes, how to bring critical awareness into faith reflection, going beyond the existing methods — the Experiential, the Liberational, the Social Science and Socialization approaches — towards a more holistic, balanced pedagogy Herein lies the popularity of TG's *Shared-Praxis* as Christian Religious Education It is comprehensive, satisfying, and extremely thorough TG calls it an "emerging" approach that is surfacing around the world, especially in grass-roots laity movements (188) He describes his approach in a number of ways that bring out its richness

> A participative and dialogical pedagogy in which people reflect critically on their own historical agency in time and place and on their social/cultural reality, have access together to the Christian Story/Vision, and personally appropriate it in community with the creative intent of renewed praxis in Christian faith toward God's reign for all creation (180)

> Christian religious education by shared praxis can be described *as a group of Christians sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action* (i e , 'observing') *in the light of the Christian Story and its Vision* (i e , 'judging') *toward the end of lived Christian faith* (i e , 'acting') (349)

From these descriptions it is clear that TG's holistic approach is an antidote for trends that put overemphasis on doctrinal orthodoxy to the positive neglect of people's personal faith maturation and integral formation as Christian apostles

A word about the author of this timely, significant book. Fr Thomas Kalathuveettil, S.D.B., is National Secretary for the C.C.B.I.'s Christian Life Commission, which is the episcopal body animating biblical, catechetical and liturgical renewal among our country's Latin Rite churches He is also Director of *Vishwa Deep*, India's only training centre offering postgraduate courses in Catechetics

Some few suggestions for the next edition (a) there are so many valuable insights and overviews of important subjects that an *index* is needed; (b) a *glossary* for key technical terms will facilitate understanding; (c) since the theory is heavy in many places a generous sprinkling of concrete *examples* will be appreciated, especially from actual catechesis as found in the series *Coming To Faith* and *God With Us*.

St Xavier's, Delhi — E. J. DALY, S.J.

Book Reviews

Abiding Astonishment. Psalms, Modernity, and the Making of History By Walter BRUEGGEMANN. Louisville Westminster/John Knox, 1991 Pp 94 $ 8 95

ISBN 0-664 25134-X

Any historical reconstruction of the past is a rhetorical act The historian belongs to a world, has a purpose and uses a specific style of rhetoric Historical reconstructions have a present tense significance So it becomes imperative to critique historiography and to read history critically

The present book is a critique of contemporary historiography of ancient Israel The book comes in the series *Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation* A review of the "Historical Psalms" (Psalms 78, 105, 106, 136) with respect to their socio-political intent and theological functioning becomes the point of departure for a discussion of the problematic they raise for the reconstruction of Israel's past

The book is divided into eight small chapters the fifth and smallest chapter being only two paragraphs long The first chapter shows how the four historical Psalms though canonical recitals of God's mighty deeds in favour of Israel — Israel's credo — express very different theological points and serve very different social liturgical functions Brueggemann explains the communal needs and social functions of these Psalms in terms of *obedience, petition, gratitude*, and *fresh political possibility*

The particular rhetoric used in these Psalms in retelling the past and their continued liturgical usage construct a particular world and oppose all contrary conceptions Chapters II and III discuss how the rhetoric of the canonical recitals fulfils its world-constructing and world destroying functions

Chapter IV brings out the basic characterisation of history in Israel, which is, reading a past that is powerfully present History *in* Israel begins with an event of *abiding astonishment* This abiding astonishment at the ingression of an inexplicable newness by Yahweh's mighty and merciful interventions is integral to Israel's continued historical experiences A reconstruction of Israel's past which ignores this dimension is a falsification of history, a betrayal of Israel's memory

The next three chapters deal with the ways in which the canonical recital, because of its particular rhetoric, becomes problematic for current trends in Israel's historiography The modern naturalist-empiricist approach, seeking to reconstruct Israel's historical past with scientific objectivity, rejects what is significant for history *in* Israel and makes it a history *of* Israel Brueggemann contends that the elimination of mystery and abiding astonishment, and the rejection of the categories of *obedience, petition gratitude*, and *fresh political possibility* as rhetorical contamination not subject to scientific control, turn out to be a decision to read historical memory in the service of established interest

A second problematic arises because of the partial nature of the canonical recital For they exclude from the normative canon the experiences of the marginalised of Israel's society, experiences that do not fit in with the canonical theme of fidelity-blessing/infidelity punishment and so raise inconvenient questions to theodicy The monopolistic recital thus becomes an establishment recital

In the context of the problematic discussed, the last chapter offers some very general suggestions for future reconstructions of Israel's past The social neutrality of history is a myth. Any reconstruction is essentially a rhetoric, necessarily partisan, and never objec-

tive. It has consequences for the present and the future. Brueggmann concludes that a naturalistic recapturing of Israel's past will not mediate the generative power of Israel's memory of its root-experiences. Also, historical reconstructions can no more push aside the memories of the marginalised excluded from the canonical recital but preserved in the scripture. Moreover, the historian must be attentive to the voice also from the margins of our society.

The insights that the author shares with the reader open up the way to a creative and responsible reading of Israel's historical Psalms and historical past. The present-tense significance of the recital which proposes a counter-world as a subversive alternative to the present world of established interests and moral indifference is clearly brought out. The book, while contributing significantly to the discussions on historiography, alerts us to the danger involved in an uncritical reconstruction of Israel's past. It makes it clear that to read the text keeping in mind its socio-political intentionality and theological functioning is a hermeneutical necessity if the reading has to be at the service of the wounded humanity of today.

Poulose MANGAI, S.J.

Many Mansions. Interfaith and Religious Intolerance. Ed. Dan COHN-SHERBOK. London: Bellew Publishing, 1992. Pp. xvi 198. £14.95. ISBN 1-85725-044-3.

Especially since Chicago 1993, dialogue is in the air, and the consequent problems. How far can Christians afford to recognize other paths to transcendental reality without undermining their own faith? How should the call to evangelism be interpreted in a context where other faiths are acknowledged and respected? The book under review accepts the problems but does not provide simplistic answers.

A point that is stressed often in this book and most elegantly by George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, is that toleration is not apathy or indifference to another's belief, it means rather that while adhering passionately to one's own belief one can still find it in one's heart to enter into the pain others feel in their own often conflicting beliefs.

We need, as Lord Runcie tells us, to rethink our theology to accommodate the pluralism of religions with the universalism and the uniqueness of Christ. What precisely was Christ and is Christ for Christians and others?, asks Andrew Linzey. "God's will is achieved through Christ because he is the Logos, the agent of co-creation—'*all* things hold together *through* him and *for* him ... *in* him all things hold together' (Col 1:16-17). But if this is true, the Gospel proclamation is not and cannot be just about the proclamation of the coming of Christ but the real and existing presence of Christ in every part of the created world. Whatever is true about Jesus is true because not one part of creation came into being without him, can exist without him, and there is no part of creation where Christ is radically absent. If we take these Christological reflections to heart, it seems to me that we are confronted not with an *exclusive* vision of Christ but a wholly *inclusive* one. What is most staggering in these early reflections is the way in which Christ is seen to hold together all the varieties and diversities of the created order. Nothing is excluded. Everything has its part to play in the eventual triumph of reconciliation."

Father Michael Barnes goes into the historical aspect of the famous Paraguay Reductions and the experiments of Matteo Ricci in China to see how God is at work in other religions.

Alan Race questions the theology of Christology, insisting that terms like 'person', 'nature', 'substance', etc., cannot be facilely repeated as their meanings and nuances have changed because of the completely different setting in which they were originally used.

Michael Nazi Ali examines the problematic of dialogue — within a community, between communities, between the Church and science, and between the Church and the arts

The one world in which we live with its close communications makes nonsense of religious isolation — thus Geoffrey Parrinder in his challenging piece on the meeting of religions today, challenging particularly to the Semitic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Westerners usually think of their religions as superior, and the Indian, Chinese and Japanese as isolated until the westerners 'discovered' them in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries In fact, Parrinder points out, the reverse is true India had a completely systematised philosophy while the Greeks — Parmenides, Heraclitus and eventually Plato and Aristotle — were still struggling to form theirs India was *the* meeting place of religions

Now isolation has ended, the walls have broken down, East has met West (pace Kipling) not only socially, on the sports field, and politically, but even in the religious sphere No one has the right to plead ignorance of any religion since adherents of all religions mingle in most countries of the world

Now adherents of all religions must examine in honest humility their attitude to other religions and indeed to their own No one religion has the monopoly of truth, or of God, still less of goodness

Finally Marcus Braybrooke tackles a topic I find very congenial — interfaith prayer He tackles it historically and practically and gives solutions according to the particular situations

Sadly there is no editorial introduction to show how and why or even when these essays were collected In fact apart from his name as author of one piece, the editor does not appear at all Also one would have liked a little more information about each of the contributors.

But these unfortunate omissions do not detract from the value and relevance of the book.

R.H. LESSER

Trinity and Ministry. By Peter Drilling. Minneapolis Fortress Press, 1991 Pp viii-223 $ 16 95 ISBN 0-8006-2490-4

This is a serious work addressing important theological and ministerial issues that are prevalent in the Church today The author has used twelve years of pastoral experience as parish priest and eight years of work as Professor of Systematic Theology to produce this beautiful theological treatise His ministerial theology is rooted in the gospel values and endeavours to bring about a synthesis of the Catholic and evangelical perspectives As a structural scheme Drilling uses the Trinitarian paradigm

In the seven chapters the author discusses issues like the relationship between the ministries of the baptized and of the ordained, the role of women in ministry, the mutual recognition of ministry by the churches, and the interior formation of Christians for ministry To me, the most appealing element is his application of the Trinitarian characteristics of God — equality, distinction, and mutuality — to the theology of ministry The Christian community has a Trinitarian structure the Church has its origin in the divine initiative of the Father, the Church is a community of the disciples of the incarnate Word and the Church is animated by the divine Spirit

In this context Drilling reflects on the teaching of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World " .. the ultimate expectation for human society is that it be a community constituted in the image of the Trinitarian community, an interpersonal communion of mutually exchanged truth and love " The Trinitarian missions include God's self-extension into the world, and the animation by the Holy Spirit in the

ministry of leadership. The resurrection of Christ is the root of the Christological and pneumatological dimensions of ordained ministry (bishops, priests and deacons). The Risen Lord constantly gives his life-giving Spirit to all the believers.

Though the author presents his work from a Roman Catholic perspective, he is not unaware of and accepts the ecumenical search for Christian unity In the pluralistic milieu of today's society his theology of ministry calls for ecumenical dialogue and a mutual recognition of ministries.

This is a significant contribution to difficult ministerial issues facing the Church today Seminaries would do well to incorporate the ideas of Peter Drilling into their programmes of formation for ministry The book demands a certain degree of motivation, seriousness and erudition in the reader

Francis PERUMALIL, S.J.

Theology of Liberation. Philosophical-Theological Background and Main Thrust By John FUELLENBACH, S V D Indore Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra, 1992. Pp ix-213 Rs 65 ISBN 81-45428-21-2.

Liberation theology is a popular topic, an object of much admiration and suspicions The author, who has taught this subject in well-known institutions for many years, presents a comprehensive view of the subject in a clear and methodical way He points out the relevance and strengths of Liberation Theology and its weaknesses.

The first chapter of Part I, "The Emergence of World Church," deals with the transition of the Church from a Jewish Christian community to a Gentile Christian community and its final emergence as a real world Church with Vatican II which stresses inculturation and solidarity with the poor Liberation Theology is seen as a form of inculturation and solidarity with the poor. The second chapter presents different models of salvation. Salvation, central to Christianity, is expressed in the Exodus event and the Paschal event. The understanding of salvation in classical religions, in St Paul, the Synoptics, St John, Traditional Theology, Neo-orthodoxy, Karl Barth, Existential Theology, Process Theology, are covered in this chapter which concludes with the model of salvation in Liberation Theology The third chapter explains how theology has been done in the past. theology as wisdom, theology as rational knowledge and theology as critical reflection on praxis in Liberation Theology

The author himself summarizes Part II "The first chapter deals with hermeneutical questions concerning the use of scripture in Liberation Theology in general and the phrase 'Kingdom of God' in particular The second will present three Liberation theologians, G. Gutierrez, L. Boff, and L. Segundo, showing briefly how they interpret the phrase 'Kingdom of God' in their theologies The remaining chapters will present what Liberation Theology considers the 'correct image' of God The most outstanding features of this image seem to be that God is a God who LIBERATES, who is concerned with JUSTICE, and who remains always a COMPASSIONATE God in dealing with sinful Israel" (p 54)

Part III deals with some basic principles of Marxism in relation to Liberation Theology The first chapter presents basic elements common to Christianity and Marxism Liberation as the transformation of the world, commitment to fellow human beings, the integration of theory and praxis, the option for the poor; Marx's Heritage and the Concept of Ideology Chapter two deals with. The Concept of Human Person and History; Substructure and Superstructure; Class Theory; Alienation, Marx and Religion; The Classless Society The Goal of History. An Appendix presents three groups of Marxists Scientific, Humanist, and

Critical. This chapter concludes with points of convergence and divergence between Marxism and Liberation Theology. The third chapter deals with unresolved questions raised by Liberation Theology such as the relationship between Salvation and Liberation, History and the Kingdom of God, and the two opposing poles in the Church — the "Already" and the "Not yet."

Part IV deals with 'Two emerging models of the Church: Neo-conservative and Basic Christian Communities'. The two models see the Church as institution and as community. The author criticises the older model and suggests a new model in the form of Basic Christian Communities. The Appendix deals with a 'Spirituality of Liberation Theology'. Fuellenbach defines this spirituality and shows the basic emphases of Liberation Theology such as the Historical Jesus, the life experience of the poor and needy, charity expressed in terms of mercy and compassion, obstacles to adopting such a spirituality, religious and the preferential option for the poor and the consequent innovatory and corrective role for Church and society.

Each Part has detailed source material which will be of help for further study. This is certainly a resource book for teachers as well as students.

Mohan JOSEPH, S J

Through Her Eyes: Women's Theology in Latin America. Edited by Elsa TAMEZ. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989. Pp. vii 168. $11.95 (pbk). ISBN 0-88344-373-2.

This book is the collection of the reflections of twenty-eight women theologians who met in Buenos Aires 1985. This group included women from different churches, and from nine countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. There is a diversity of opinions, nuances, experiences and impressions.

About 50% of the population anywhere are women, but women are condemned to live in a world of male domination and female discrimination. Even at the embryonic stage the female is either condemned and annihilated, or tolerated to survive. Anna Maria Bidegain narrates how women were captives and slaves in a number of ways in Latin American history. They were used for slave labour, as the master's sex-tools and as mothers to reproduce a labour force for the hardest kinds of work. A male dominated ideology supported by socio historical subjugation kept or left women on the pedestal of religion and family. "Here she was everything!" However, she had no role in political and professional life. Teresa Cavalcanti says "God is someone who helps us believe we are valuable and who helps us fight for what we need. Freedom is not our goal: any one who takes up the struggle is already free" (p. 138). Elsa Tamez says that women need a militant theology. There should be a theological and ideological approach.

It is emphasized in the book that women have to make new interpretations of the Bible. Maria Clara Bingemer gives a lengthy re-reading of the Trinity. She finds feminine traits in the Father: merciful and benevolent, in the Son, the manifestation of a tender, warm, and affectionate personality; in the Spirit, a soothing and gentle breeze. All these are feminine traits. An entire chapter is devoted to Christology. Jesus stands for women. Similarly the chapter on the prophetic role of women in the Bible is well developed. Mary's song — the Magnificat — has powerful implications.

From this book we become more aware that in Latin America's evangelization and liberative struggles women have had and have a great and pioneering role. Women's worth, equality and dignity are like the lost drachma to be discovered and celebrated with great joy in theological circles.

This forceful volume is a stimulant for a relevant theology of women.

P.A. JOSEPH, OFM Cap.

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Vol. LVIII MARCH 1994 No. 3

Editorial

The African Synod

This is the year not of one but of two Synods in the Catholic Church. The regular Synod is on religious life, to which the *Vidyajyoti Journal* special July issue was dedicated last year. It will take place in October, 2-29. The other is the Special Assembly of the Synod for Africa (see *Latin Code of Canon Law*, 345.3) which will begin in April 10th and end on May 8th.

For years voices had been heard in Africa asking for a pan-African Council that would enable the Church in that continent to define better its identity and mission and cope with the impressive growth in the last century, coming up to around 92 millions of Catholics now as against less than 20 millions at the middle of this century. The social and political conditions of that continent in effervescence have changed considerably in the last twenty-five years and a Council seemed an appropriate demand, rich in promise for the orientation of that Church.

For reasons not so clear to the general public the request for a Council was turned down: instead, the Special Assembly of the Synod was announced, significantly on the 6th January 1989, feast of the Epiphany. (The gospel account of this mystery ends with the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt, within the African continent.) A Council is primarily a meeting of the bishops as representatives of the Church in a region, or in the whole world (Ecumenical Council), to exercise their common responsibility for the service of God's Kingdom. The Synod is an assembly of a group of bishops to counsel the Pope and assist him in his office as Pastor of the Universal Church. It is strange that about the time when the Synod for Africa was announced, the bishops

of Catalonia, a small region in Spain, announced the approval of Rome for the convocation of a "Provincial Council" of the ecclesiastical province of Tarragona, and including the See of Barcelona. There must be canonical or ecclesiological reasons for the different decisions in the two cases. It would be good for the Church to make them public, less its image appears ambiguous.

There was a further disappointment when last year the Pope announced in Kampala, Uganda, not only the date of the Synod but also the place: the *"working session"* would take place in the Vatican "where all assemblies of the Synod of Bishops have been held," but "I have the intention of coming to *Africa* for a *celebration phase* to solemnly promulgate the fruits of the Special Assembly," said the Pope speaking to the Bishops and to other participants in the Solemn Vespers inaugurating the Seventh Meeting of the Council of the General Secretariate of the Synod for Africa, on 9th February 1993. (*OR*, Engl. ed., 17 Feb. 1993, p. 9). In the same meeting he announced that the theme of this Synod is "The Church in Africa and her Evangelizing Mission towards the year 2000· 'You will be my witness' (Acts 1:18)." Again we assume that there must be reasons for the decision to hold an *African* Synod in Rome as an advisory assembly to the Roman Pontiff the meeting in Rome may seem appropriate. There may be other reasons of logistics or of difficulty of deciding on a specific country in a continent colonially divided into French and English-speaking areas ... But again it may be useful to make the reasons public, less the decision appear as a sign of mistrust of the Roman authorities for the local churches in non-European continents.

In his speech in Uganda, the Pope stressed the rootedness of the Synod in the African reality: the exhortation of Paul VI in Kampala in 1969 to the African bishops to live the "ecclesial communion", the Epiphany 1989 announcement of the Synod at an appropriate date, the presentation of the *Lineamenta* in Lomé, Togo, on 25 July 1990; the three meetings of the Secretariat (out of seven) summoned on African soil and the release of the *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Synod on the same day when the time and place were announced in Kampala. It would have been nice if this concern for rootedness in the African reality had found also a symbolic expression in a celebration even of the working session on African soil, and even more if a Council had been convoked. We can of course hope that the Synod may be eventually a preparation for a fuller assembly of a Council for

Africa and in Africa.

For a Synod is a march, as the Pope himself stressed, and the march does not stop with any celebration: "The world 'Synod' literally means a walking together: 'syn-odos'. It provides a powerful image which can be applied not only to the actual assembly but also to all the phases of the preparation which preceded that gathering. All the members of the Church in Africa — clergy, religious and laity — are making a *common journey*, 'walking together', placing their gifts at the service of the Church in Africa, for the sake of the forthcoming Special Assembly" (*OR, ibid*).

We in India shall surely pray for God's blessings on this important Assembly which concerns not only the bishops that will meet in Rome but the whole Church in that continent. Moreover, the Synod of our sister Church has a special relevance for us in India. Many of our priests and nuns serve in African churches. Much of Africa struggles with problems similar to those in India: the liberation from the aftereffects of colonialism, the inculturation of the faith to the local reality, the dialogue with Islam and other religions, the proclamation of good news in a relevant and respectful manner. In particular the way in which our tribal Christians of India perceive the reality of God and the meaning of the revelation of Jesus in their lives and culture can resonate with the ways in which Africa is experimenting. There can be much mutual enrichment between tribal India and Africa because of the similarities in culture. In a sense it is the faith of the "Indigenous Peoples" that will be celebrated in the Synod.

We are happy to publish in this issue an article by an African Christian on the way he sees the role of the Synod in his Church. Another African scholar shows us what lessons the history of the encounter of Africa and the Christian faith can offer us on the ways cultures react to one another. We also publish an account of an important meeting which took place in the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples which may lead to a breakthrough in the service of the Church to this world-wide cultural layer that has been generally marginalised from the economic and social power centres of the emerging world, but today awakens to a new self-consciousness. May the Joy of Easter inspire us with hope and confidence in our service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and may Our Lady of Africa bless its Synod. ☐

VJTR 58(1994) 132-135

An African Synod Brewed in a Roman Pot

Tarcisis MUKUKA

One could well imagine the many sighs of *nunc dimittis* (Lk 2:19-22) when John Paul II announced on 6 January 1989 that he was at last convoking a special Synod of Bishops on Africa. Here was the opportunity to celebrate the coming of age of the *Ecclesia Africana*. The recent announcement in Kampala by John Paul II that the African Synod would take place in Rome beginning on 10 April 1994 seems to have put a slight damper on such hopes. The aim of this short communication is to comment on the recently published *Instrumentum laboris*, which will be used as a basis for the Synod discussions. But I wish to put in, edge-wise, a comment on the choice of Rome as the venue for the African Synod.

What is in a Venue?

In his presentation of the *Lineamenta*, Archbishop Jan Schotte, CICM, gave the following definition of a Synod:

> An assembly of the Synod of Bishops is a symbol and expression of the universal concern of the Pope together with the episcopate for the worldwide Church, and serves as one of the instruments of ecclesial communion and collegiality which is associated with that shared responsibility [1]

Given such a sublime scope, it is with a certain sense of disappointment that African theologians have reacted to the choice of Rome as venue. They bewail a lost symbolic and theological opportunity, namely, having the Synod take place in Africa would have been a symbolic affirmation of the maturity

1 Opening speech of the 9th plenary session of SECAM in Lomé, Togo on 24 July 1990

of the African Church and of the theological importance of the local Church. I personally think that such ideas are more valuable in cloud-cuckoo-land than in the present state of things. Whether we like it or not, Africa is still tied to the umbilical cord of western Christianity, both in financial and other terms. I therefore consider logistic considerations to have been compelling enough to outweigh symbolic and theological considerations and to tilt the scale in favour of Rome.

The Instrumentum Laboris

The *Instrumentum laboris* comprises an Introduction followed by Parts I and II. Part I treats of the evangelising mission of the Church. Part II is divided into five chapters dealing with the five Synod topics: Proclaiming the Good News of Salvation, Inculturation, Dialogue, Justice and Peace, and Means of Social Communication. On the level of theology, the *Instrumentum laboris* is very rich, with ample citations of papal pronouncements. In my opinion the best chapter in this regard is the chapter on Peace and Justice. Two major weaknesses can be pointed with regard to the document. A number of African episcopal pronouncements made over the last ten years could have been cited to supplement those of the Holy Father. But the most serious flaw is methodological. The deductive rather than the inductive approach predominates in the document. The questions that had been posed in the *Lineamenta* and the answers collated in the *Instrumentum laboris* seem to reflect more the theological nightmares of prelates and those in the higher échelons of power than the *gaudium et spes* of the ordinary Christian at the parish or small Christian community level.

In spite of the shortcomings of the *Instrumentum laboris*, the Synod can still serve the African aspirations and hopes. Church pronouncements are not points of arrival or destinations but points of departure. I think that an African Synod brewed in a Roman pot can still provide a substantial and interesting fare, whatever the ingredients that have gone into its cooking.[2] ☐

---

2. A Spanish version of this article appeared in *Misiones Extranjeras* 136-137 (July-Oct 1993), pp. 436-7. We are grateful to the editor for supplying us with the original version written in Rome in June 1993, and for allowing its publication here.

VJTR 58 (1994) 134-150

The Missionary Factor in the Development of Nationalism in Colonial Africa:1891-1900 Revisited

Dr. L. Ugwuanya Nwosu

The relation of nationalism to the mission in Africa has often been described· education, the gospel values, the organisational techniques. But even the negative attitudes of the missionaries to the local cultures, their support of the colonial invasion, their reluctance to promote local leadership among the clergy, are shown here to have resulted in a reaction that fanned the nationalist flames. In the context of the African Synod next month it is important to learn from, history the power of the national sentiment. **Dr Nwosu is Principal Lecturer in the Dept of Religious Studies, Alvan Ikoku College of Education, PMB 1033, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria.**

1. Locating the Problem

In 1991, *Indian Missiological Review* published Udobata R. Onuwa's "Missionary factor in African Nationalism " The aim of the author was to say that Missionary activities produced, or helped to further, the course of the nationalist movements in Africa. But he analyzed only the positive aspects of the missionary activities, namely missionary school education, Christian principles as taught in the churches and similar gatherings, the translation of the Bible into the indigenous languages, and so on

For the author, education stands at the apex of the "missionary factor"

> Subjects like civics, history and biography which were in the curriculum were very useful to enlighten the minds of the young Africans. The study of European and American . history agitated the minds of many African nationalists. To some of them, such study challenged and assured them that "to fight for one's right" was legitimate.[1]

1 Udobata ONUWA "Missionary Factor in African Nationalism," *Indian Missiological Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Sept. 1991) p. 35.

Additionally, Onunwa avers, "African nationalism was strongly influenced by Christian principles."[2] He cites some examples of these principles taught by missionaries: 1. "The worth and dignity of the individual in the sight of God"; 2. The teaching on salvation which, as interpreted and understood by the Africans in their religio-cultural background, "went beyond the ordinary liberation from sin"[3] to include liberation from anything that oppressed. The Bible, he insists, "redeemed the African individual from ... reactionary forces" and helped him "to reassert himself above colonial powers."[4] Indeed, the author sees the teaching on Christian principles presented by the missionaries as

> a frontal attack on beliefs and customs that are oppressive, inhuman, exploitative, dehumanizing and unjust. The seeds of revolution are inherent in the Christian gospel preached by the missionaries.[5]

Onunwa succeeds in making his points. His thesis stands in line with the works of Ade Ajayi, E. A. Ayandele, David Abernethy and others. Ade Ajayi's "Nineteenth Century Origins of Nigerian Nationalism," published in the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* in 1961, is perhaps one of the most detailed studies of the role of the Christian missionaries in the emergence and development of nationalism in colonial Nigeria. Ajayi contends that

> the Christian missionaries introduced into Nigeria the ideas of nation building of contemporary Europe. They also trained a group of Nigerians who accepted those ideas and hoped to see them carried out, and later began to use those ideas as a standard to judge the actions of the British administration. In doing this, the Christian movement sowed the seeds of Nigerian nationalism.[6]

His *Christian Missions in Nigeria: The Making of a New Elite*, published by Longman in 1965, undertakes a critical analysis of the contribution of missionary education to the creation of a new African elite and all its immense social, political and economic consequences.

David Abernethy's *Political Dilemma of Popular Education*, the first full-length case study of the relationship between edu-

2. *Ibid.*, p.34.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
6. A. F. Ade Ajayi, "Nineteenth Century Origins of Nigerian Nationalism," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 11/4 (Dec. 1961) p. 197.

cation and political development in a new nation, shows among other things that

> the early educational activities of the missionaries increased the capacity of southern Nigerians to resist colonial rule, for the beginning of their nationalist movement were grounded in the very same values and organizational techniques that had been imported by the Europeans.[7]

Both E. A. Ayandele and A. J. Temm share the view that the activities of Western Christian missionaries in Africa evoked the emergence of nationalism in colonial Africa. In the secular dimension, it has been argued that the rise of politico-cultural nationalism in Africa and Asia was a direct consequence of the behaviour of the colonial administrators. Rupert Emerson has argued that the nature of colonial setting played a significant role in the development of nationalism. He avers: "In Asia and Africa, nationalism is essentially the response of peoples to the impact of the West."[8]

The aim of this paper is to carry the discussion a little further by examining the negative aspects of the missionary activities that evoked the emergence and development of nationalism in colonial Africa, aspects which Dr Onunwa's paper does not cover To do this, examples will be drawn from East and West Africa.

2. Nationalism Defined

It may perhaps be germane to define the word nationalism in this discussion. Hodgkin defines African Nationalism as

> any organization or group that explicitly asserts the rights, claims and aspirations of a given African society .. in opposition to European authority, whatever its institutional forms and objectives.[9]

For James Coleman, nationalism is essentially a political term, and a nationalist movement would include only those types of organizations which have as their object the realization of independence or self-government for a recognized African nation.[10]

Coleman had a narrow view of what a nationalist movement means. Many movements that can in fact rightly be de-

7 David Abernethy, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education. An African Case*. Standford: Stanford University Press, 1969, pp. 49-50.

8 Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation. The Rise of Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960, p. 61

9 Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*. London: Frederick Muller, 1956, p. 23.

10. J. S. Coleman, "Nationalism in Tropical Africa," *American Political Science Review* XLVIII, 2 (June, 1954), *passim*.

scribed as nationalist have continued to emerge in Africa even after African States have attained their political independence or self-government. A nationalist movement may properly be defined as any organization that protests against European condemnation of and systematic attempts to destroy African ways, rejects the imposition of alien political, economic, religious and cultural forms or structures on Africans and on African institutions, and asserts the right to introduce indigenous forms and structures based on the understanding and genius of the indigenous people.

Thus nationalist groups may be found in politics, in the judiciary, in the legislative arm of government, in cultural matters, in the ecclesiastical realm and even in the academia.[11]

3. Religio-Cultural Genocide

The question may then be asked: What negative aspects of missionary activities evoked nationalism in colonial Africa? One of the most important of these negative aspects was the way in which the missionaries condemned African cultural and religious beliefs and practices. In their sermons, in their open and private conversations with the indigenous people, in their prayer and committee meetings, and in every other gathering of the 'faithful', many missionaries condemned as evil every aspect of African religious and cultural life, including even people's names. The converts were not allowed to participate in socio-cultural activities including initiation into traditional religio-cultural societies. To become a Christian, the African convert had to abandon his old ways and become a European in every way, including abandoning his wives and renouncing his indigenous name for a European name at baptism — a reminiscence of the behaviour of the Jewish Christians toward the gentile converts. This condemnation of the entire gamut of innocent African religio-cultural and social practices evoked nationalism.

Many African converts, including some evangelists and teachers, began to react in various ways. James Coleman agrees that

---

11 E.g., a historiography commonly referred to as an "African Nationalist historiography" emerged at the turn of the century. Demonstrably revisionist in orientation, its main aim was to correct the African historical image as painted in colonial and missionary historiographies. The literature on this is enormous, but see, for example, E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842 - 1914. A Political and Social Analysis* London: Longman 1966, and A.J Temu, *British Protestant Missions*. London: Longman, 1972.

cation and political development in a new nation, shows among other things that

> the early educational activities of the missionaries increased the capacity of southern Nigerians to resist colonial rule, for the beginning of their nationalist movement were grounded in the very same values and organizational techniques that had been imported by the Europeans.[7]

Both E. A. Ayandele and A. J. Temm share the view that the activities of Western Christian missionaries in Africa evoked the emergence of nationalism in colonial Africa. In the secular dimension, it has been argued that the rise of politico-cultural nationalism in Africa and Asia was a direct consequence of the behaviour of the colonial administrators. Rupert Emerson has argued that the nature of colonial setting played a significant role in the development of nationalism. He avers: "In Asia and Africa, nationalism is essentially the response of peoples to the impact of the West "[8]

The aim of this paper is to carry the discussion a little further by examining the negative aspects of the missionary activities that evoked the emergence and development of nationalism in colonial Africa, aspects which Dr Onunwa's paper does not cover To do this, examples will be drawn from East and West Africa

2. Nationalism Defined

It may perhaps be germane to define the word nationalism in this discussion Hodgkin defines African Nationalism as

> any organization or group that explicitly asserts the rights, claims and aspirations of a given African society in opposition to European authority, whatever its institutional forms and objectives.[9]

For James Coleman, nationalism is essentially a political term, and a nationalist movement would include only those types of organizations which have as their object the realization of independence or self-government for a recognized African nation.[10]

Coleman had a narrow view of what a nationalist movement means. Many movements that can in fact rightly be de-

7 David ABERNETHY, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education An African Case* Standford. Stanford University Press, 1969, pp 49-50

8. Rupert EMERSON, *From Empire to Nation The Rise of Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples*. Boston. Beacon Press, 1960, p 61

9 Thomas HODGKIN, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*. London: Frederick Muller, 1956, p. 23.

10. J S. COLEMAN, "Nationalism in Tropical Africa," *American Political Science Review* XLVIII, 2 (June, 1954), *passim*.

scribed as nationalist have continued to emerge in Africa even after African States have attained their political independence or self-government. A nationalist movement may properly be defined as any organization that protests against European condemnation of and systematic attempts to destroy African ways, rejects the imposition of alien political, economic, religious and cultural forms or structures on Africans and on African institutions, and asserts the right to introduce indigenous forms and structures based on the understanding and genius of the indigenous people.

Thus nationalist groups may be found in politics, in the judiciary, in the legislative arm of government, in cultural matters, in the ecclesiastical realm and even in the academia.[11]

3. Religio-Cultural Genocide

The question may then be asked: What negative aspects of missionary activities evoked nationalism in colonial Africa? One of the most important of these negative aspects was the way in which the missionaries condemned African cultural and religious beliefs and practices. In their sermons, in their open and private conversations with the indigenous people, in their prayer and committee meetings, and in every other gathering of the 'faithful', many missionaries condemned as evil every aspect of African religious and cultural life, including even people's names. The converts were not allowed to participate in socio-cultural activities including initiation into traditional religio-cultural societies. To become a Christian, the African convert had to abandon his old ways and become a European in every way, including abandoning his wives and renouncing his indigenous name for a European name at baptism — a reminiscence of the behaviour of the Jewish Christians toward the gentile converts. This condemnation of the entire gamut of innocent African religio-cultural and social practices evoked nationalism.

Many African converts, including some evangelists and teachers, began to react in various ways. James Coleman agrees that

11 E.g., a historiography commonly referred to as an "African Nationalist historiography" emerged at the turn of the century. Demonstrably revisionist in orientation, its main aim was to correct the African historical image as painted in colonial and missionary historiographies. The literature on this is enormous, but see, for example, E. A. AYANDELE, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842 - 1914. A Political and So*[illegible]

nationalism in colonial Nigeria was a reaction against the missionaries' aim of total Europeanization of the African Christian, "especially when the abandonment of many meaningful customs and institutions was made a pre-condition for entry into the Kingdom of God."[12]

In Nigeria, for example, the Igbo evangelists employed every force of argument to convince their European counterparts that a good number of the customs they condemned, such as naming ceremonies, second burials, new yam festivals, initiation rituals, title taking and other forms of traditional institutions, were largely social in nature and did not in any way conflict with Christian beliefs[13] They were fabrics of society. Preventing Igbo converts from taking title or from getting initiated into these cultural societies, for example, meant that they were automatically excluded from political participation since leaders were, as a rule, selected mainly from the rank and file of titled men and members of these societies. In fact, in many parts of Igboland, the various independent ethnic polities were ruled by cultural societies and titled men, a fact the Roman Catholic Mission in Southeastern Nigeria recognized in time and effectively utilized. At Umuahia in Southeastern Nigeria, for example, the Okonko — a cultural society — was used in the opening of new mission stations[14] As V. A Nwosu puts it,

> The Okonko society played a useful part in some parts of Umuahia diocese Banned by the Protestants at Umuahia as pagan and superstitious and unworthy of a Christian, the Okonko society was treated differently by Catholic missionaries . At Ajatta Ibeku, Father Whytte met a group of the members during his pioneering visit for that area Convinced that they did not necessarily engage in devilish, inhuman acts and that they were ready to accept the Catholic faith, he went on to found a Catholic centre at Ajatta . The spread of the Catholic faith in many parts of the Umuahia diocese . was through the help of the Okonko society.[15]

This quotation shows that some missionaries in Africa, especially from the Roman Catholic missions, did not engage in the outright thoughtless condemnation of the people's ways,

12 J S. Coleman, *Nigeria. Background to Nationalism* Benin. Broburg and Wistrom, Paperback edition 1986, p 107

13. See F K. Ekechi, *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland, 1957-1914.* London: Frank Cass, 1972 p 165

14. V A. Nwosu, "The Laity and Church Growth," in C.A. Obi (ed.), *A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985.* Onitsha. Africana — FEP Publishers 1985, pp 337-338.

15. [illegible]

and as a result could not be said to have contributed in the negative sense to the rise of nationalism in colonial Nigeria. It may be inferred that, because of the generally positive attitude of Catholic missionaries toward African culture, many early nationalists did emerge from the Catholic Church. Perhaps further researches may throw more light on this assertion.

Part of a resolution — which by all standards was nationalist in character — of a Conference of the Protestant missions which took place at Calabar, Nigeria, in 1911, declared that it was "unwise" for European missionaries "to condemn indiscriminately as evil everything connected with native life."[16] Thus, attempts by missionaries to condemn and systematically eliminate all facets of traditional life met with serious resistance and produced nationalist tendencies that could be compared with political and cultural nationalism in colonial Africa.

Many of those who led the nationalist resistance to the missionary attempts to destroy African culture and religion were evangelists and clergymen. E. A. Ayandele has described Bishop Johnson of Nigeria as the pioneer of African nationalism [17] Nationalist protests against the religio-cultural genocide which the missionaries perpetrated against Africa took various forms: the rise of African independent churches, the introduction of some indigenous cultural practices into some mission churches, the rejection of European names by some Church leaders, and so on. Several studies on African independent Church movements show that nationalist protest against the imposition of alien practices on African converts ranks high amongst the explanations of the genesis of these churches.[18]

Africans who could not, for one reason or another, leave the mission churches reacted in other ways. In Nigeria, many Church leaders dropped their foreign names for indigenous names. For example, Rev. David B. Vincent became Mojola Agbebi, George William Johnson became Oshokale Tejumade Johnson and in

---

16. *CMS G3/A/0 Minutes of the Missionary Conference at Calabar*, Nov. 7-9, 1911. See also L.U Nwosu, "The Cultural Dilemma of the Nigerian Christian: The Igbo case." *Alvana Journal of the Social Sciences*, Vol 1/2 (Oct. 1982) p. 59

17 E. A. Ayandele, *Holy Johnson: The Pioneer of African Nationalism, 1836 - 1917* London: Frank Cass, 1970.

18. See for example David B Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa. An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements*. London. Oxford University Press, 1968, 1970. Reprint, pp. 92-98, Nathaniel I. Ndiokwere, *Prophecy and Revolution: The Role of Prophets in the Independent African Churches and in Biblical Tradition* London: SPCK, 1981, pp. 17-27

recent times Sir Dr Francis Ibiam became Dr Akanu Ibiam. Although Rev James Johnson did not change his name, he refused to baptize children with foreign names.[19]

4. Missionary Support for Colonialism in Africa

African historians have continued to insist that many missionaries in Africa played a significant role in the colonization of Africa. They were regarded as colonial instruments for pacifying the conquered people and in many places supported the power organization of the colonial governments. G. C. Oosthuizen avers:

> The Church itself in Africa lived on imperial and political favour, and the Christian missionary was at times a pioneer of the white man's penetration. Livingstone blazed the trail for Christianity and commerce.[20]

The Niger Expedition of 1841, in which missionaries of the Church Missionary Society took an active part, has been described as a great imperial ambition for the extension of British influence in West Africa.[21] E. A Ayandele affirms that the colonial government and the missionaries were birds of the same feather and the Nigerian peoples "saw them really flocking together."[22] For A J Temu, the missionaries prepared the way for the British Government "The Arabs on the coast," he says, "had quickly discovered this alliance between the missionaries and the imperialists."[23] According to him, "the majority of the resident missionaries were in support of white supremacy in Kenya."[24] He avers that, in fact, missionaries "served as an arm of colonial administration."[25] The strongest evidence of Temu's claim is to be found in a statement of Charles Eliot, one of the colonial administrators in Kenya, who said: "The opening of a new missionary station had seemed to me to be generally as efficacious for the extension of European influence as the opening of a government station."[26]

The missionaries played a major role in winning Nigeria for Britain. As Ayandele contends, there is no better evidence for

19 J F Ade AJAYI (see note 6), p 207

20 G C OOSTHUIZEN, *Post-Christianity in Africa* London. C. Hurst, 1968, p 6.

21 Geoffrey MOREHOUSE, *The Missionaries* London Eyre Nethuen, 1973, p 81

22 E. A AYANDELE (see note 11), Preface, p XVII

23 A J TEMU (see note 11), p 38

24 *Ibid* p 127

25. *Ibid* p 132.

26. Charles ELIOT, *East African Protectorate* London: 1905, p. 241 as quoted by A J TEMU, *ibid.* p 93

this claim than that of Sir H. H. Johnson, himself one of the builders of British Nigeria, who in 1911 told the British public: "In fact, the CMS, for good or for evil, has done more to create British Nigeria than the British government."[27] By supporting the creation of reserves in East Africa, A. J. Temu concludes, the missionaries "advocated a policy of racial discrimination in Africa."[28] After 1917, it became quite clear that the missionaries were part of colonial administration in Kenya. According to Temu, one of the colonial administrators in Kenya had argued that "the missions were henceforth to become an arm of the colonial administration as members of the British Empire."[29]

The picture appears to be the same all over Africa. In 1850, Winniet, the Governor of the Gold Coast, requested Thomas Birch Freeman to accompany him on a tour of the Danish possessions which had been transferred to the British Government,[30] and in May of the same year, he offered the missionary a post in the administration as clerk of the newly established Legislative Council.[31] Although the appointment was not finally approved, Winniet's successors continued to call on Freeman's services which the missionary was always disposed to render.

What all this means is that many missionaries in Africa in fact worked hand-in-glove with the colonial administration and thus share in every aspect in which the colonial administration, by its actions, evoked nationalism.

5. Missionary Support of Colonial Aggression

It has been claimed that missionaries in colonial Africa supported the colonial administration in their unprovoked attacks on Africa, thereby contributing, just as the colonial government did, to the emergence of nationalism in Africa.

It is nothing new today to assert that the way the colonial government fought pockets of independent ethnic counties in Africa evoked nationalist reactions. Thus, whoever was party to this unprovoked aggression contributed to the rise of nationalism.

27. E. A. Ayandele, "Traditional Rulers and Missionaries in Pre-Colonial Africa," *Tarikh*, Vol. 3/1 (1969), p.38.

28. A. J. Temu, *loc. cit.*, p. 101.

29. *Ibid.* p. 121.

30. See C. G. Baeta (ed.), *Christianity in Tropical Africa: Studies presented and discussed at the Seventh International African Seminar, University of Ghana, April 1965.* London: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 41.

In an article already cited (see note 27), E. A. Ayandele says that the British bombardment of Lagos in 1851 was held by a missionary as a providential blessing that would open a way for the evangelization of other parts of Yorubaland.[32] Ayandele further shows that the favourable disposition of missionaries to military expedition against West African rulers was well expressed by a Southern American Baptist missionary who, on the eve of a military expeditions said: "War is often a means of opening a door for the gospel to enter a country. A sword of steel often goes before a sword of spirit."[33]

It has also been shown that the full scale British military expedition against the Asante of Ghana in 1896 was inspired by the missionaries. A Basel Evangelical missionary had insisted that the British Government should quicken action on the war. The government should do this "for God's sake, for humanity's sake, for the sake of *the prestige* the English Government has still on the Gold Coast."[34]

In a Church service in Accra on July 22, 1900, to commemorate the British victory in this battle against the Asante, Rev. W. Hastings Kelk, the colonial chaplain in Gold Coast said:

> We thank him for this, and more especially as British subjects, that the representative of our Queen has been preserved, her brave and loyal soldiers and subjects saved, and the prestige of the British empire remains unharmed.[35]

Although Ayandele tries to defend the missionaries on their stance by saying that they were not necessarily a trigger-happy set of people, that considering the nature of their mission and their perspective of the indigenous setting, those expeditions which they either inspired or supported or even sponsored were considered capable of producing positive results in the interest of the christianization enterprise, yet, such open support to the colonial government in its wars against the colonized peoples of Africa angered the people and began to produce nationalist reactions.

Before the British military expedition against the Aro Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria in 1901, Father Le Roy had, in a memorandum to Paris, described the whole military operation being planned against the people as a "civilizing expedition."[36] And in

32. Ibid. p. 31.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid. p. 35.
35. Ibid. pp. 36-37
36. CSE: Paris 191/B/11, Memo by Father LeRoy, 15 Oct. 1901, as cited by F. K.

his report for 1902, Father Leon Lejeune urged his missionary overlords in Paris to bring their full force to support the expedition, insisting: "This war is necessary."[37] Both the CMS and the Presbyterians gave it full support. For example, the Presbyterians supplied their steam boats while Dr Rattray, their medical missionary, was appointed chaplain and medical officer for the troops.[38] As O. U. Kalu puts it, the missionaries moved in happily "behind the smoke of guns" to establish Christianity among the conquered people.[39]

In East Africa, the missionaries did all they could to destroy Harry Thuku's Young Kikuyu Association formed in June 1921, an association whose primary motive was to fight against the colonial government's forced labour decree, the land system and the planned wage reduction. At the instigation of the missionaries, the colonial government in Kenya arrested Thuku in March 1922. His supporters and members of YKA who gathered in front of the police post where he was detained were fired at by the police and twenty-five people were shot dead.[40]

As A. J. Temu puts the matter, the missionaries' hostility to the Young Kikuyu Association did not succeed in diverting the Kikuyu people from militant politics. Rather, this action fired their nationalist zeal and "helped to stampede the association into unprecedented popularity.[41] Harry Thuku's YKA was succeeded by the Kikuyu Central Association, an association which, with the Native Councils formed in 1925, was later to become prominent in the African break with mission schools and churches from 1929, and the entire nationalist struggle of the Kikuyu people. By 1929, the Kikuyu were beginning to demand a secular education. According to the *Kikuyu Province Annual Report for 1929*, "the Kikuyu demanded for secular education and school as opposed to mission controlled schools."[42] Thus, the beginning of nationalist struggle against both the missionary and the colonial government in Kenya is to be sought in the attitude of the missionaries towards Africa.

EKECHI (see note 13), p. 122.

37. *CSE Paris 191/B/11*, LEJEUNE to Directors, Report for 1902. See *ibid.*

38. E. A. AYANDELE, (see note 11) pp. 113-4

39. O.U. KALU (ed.), *Christianity in West Africa: The Nigerian Story*. Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1978, p.312.

40. A. J. TEMU, *loc cit.* pp., 133-134.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

6. Missionary Opposition to African Leadership in Mission Churches

Perhaps there is nothing that fans nationalism more than a rejection or denial — by a foreign agency — of the rights of the indigenous people to participate in the leadership of a political, cultural, social or religious organization. Behind the political nationalism that characterized colonial Africa lay the colonial governments' denial of the rights of Africans either to rule themselves or to participate actively and meaningfully in the rule of their countries.

The missionaries, by their action in this regard, provoked the emergence of a nationalism of equal vibrancy as political nationalism in colonial Africa. Evidence abounds all over Africa to substantiate the assertion that by their actions Western missionaries opposed African leadership in mission churches, or the emergence of religious movements under African initiative and leadership — obstensibly for fear that they were political movements — and by so doing evoked the rise of a nationalist reaction among African Christians

The case of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther in West Africa is perhaps too familiar to mention. The removal of Crowther as the first Bishop of the CMS Niger Mission and his replacement by a white Bishop not only caused a nationalist upsurge amongst the CMS Christians and the local people, but also brought about a large scale conversion to the Catholic faith. It was said that an Anglican catechist, Akubueze, instructed seventy local people of Ossomari to join the Catholic Church.[43]

Not only was Crowther removed as Bishop, but Davis, the CMS missionary at Onitsha, appointed "foreigners" instead of the local people to key positions in the parish.[44] This action further angered the local people against the CMS and fired their nationalist zeal

In East Africa, the way European missionaries treated the Bombay Africans — liberated African slaves trained as catechists and teachers in Nashik in Bombay, India — caused nationalist reactions By 1874 these Africans began to return to Mombasa

43. C. A. Obi (ed.), *A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria*, p 76.

44. P. B. Clarke, "The Methods and Ideology of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria, 1885-1905" in O. U. Kalu (ed.), *The History of Christianity in West Africa*. London: Longman 1980, p. 48.

to help William Salt Price in the administration of Fereretown. Fereretown served the same purpose as Freetown in Sierra Leone in West Africa — a settlement for freed slaves. As A.J. Temu puts it, these Africans from Bombay were a people "cut out for leadership by their education and experience."[45]

The European missionaries in East Africa themselves recognized their indispensability. Temu says that "without their efforts and initiative, the work of the mission would have failed."[46] They succeeded where the Europeans failed, in both the CMS and UMCA missions.

A. J. Lambs, who succeeded William Price in 1876, began to take steps towards inducing an African bishop from the rank and file of these Bombay Africans. His choice was George David. It may well be that his design did not receive the approval of the greater percentage of European missionaries. As a result, his plans were nipped in the bud when, in 1879, he was removed and other Europeans, who were evidently averse to African leadership, were sent to replace him.

Fearing that these Bombay Africans were becoming both popular and acceptable amongst their people, and suspecting that, following A J. Lamb's earlier proposals, they might soon begin to aspire to leadership positions, these new European missionaries began to descredit them. They were described as slovenly, drunkards, lazy and liars. And feeling they were being grossly misrepresented and victimized, as a clan, these Africans wrote a memorandum to Salisbury square. "The Bombay Africans, Defence of their Character," a memo which demonstrated the nationalist fervour that was beginning to grow following the action by their European counterparts.

William Price, who was sent out in December 1881 to investigate the matter, began inquiries in 1882. His report did not recommend the removal of these Bombay Africans, but rather commended highly their efforts. Part of the report reads. "The facts speak for themselves. It may well be asked where should we be now but for the valuable help which these men and women have given and are giving."[47] The report further helped to increase the nationalist zeal of not only the Bombay Africans but also a great majority of the natives who were beginning to conclude that the European missionaries were merely trying to give

45 A. J Temu, *British Protestant Missions*, p 66.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

a dog a bad name in order to hang it.

The formation of the African Workers Council in 1901 — a welfare association intended primarily to maintain the interest of those working for the CMS Mombasa mission — appeared to be an eloquent expression of nationalist consciousness that was beginning to rise among the people of East Africa, principally as a result of how European missionaries were treating the native African catechists and evangelists. As would be expected, the CMS suspected the African Workers Council to be a political organization and did everything possible to suppress it. But just as the missionaries' hostility toward Harry Thuku's Young Kikuyu Association of a later date catapulted the organization into an unprecedented popularity, so did their fear and opposition against AWC make it stronger and much more popular. The refusal of the European missionaries to give authority to the Africans also resulted in the foundation of an independent African Church — an action which itself is a nationalist response to the colonial situation B A. Ogot's study of the Church of Christ in Africa sees the protracted refusal of the Church Missionary Society in Nyanza to give authority to the African clergy as the causative factor for the emergence of that Church [48]

7. Missionary Monopoly of the Educational Delivery System

It has generally been said that the education which the missionaries gave to the Africans galvanized them into nationalist activities This point has been made by Udobata Onunwa, David Abernethy, A F. Ade Ajayi and others, as has earlier been mentioned As also mentioned, these authors considered what may be described as the positive aspects of the educational enterprise But they did not consider the missionaries' monopoly of the educational delivery system which was another very important negative dimension of missionary activity which produced nationalism in colonial Africa. J. S Coleman shares this view about missionary activity in Nigeria when he said: "Through their extensive evangelical activity and long monopoly in the field of education, Christian missionaries played a critical role in the rise of nationalism in Nigeria "[49]

48. F B. WELBOURN and B. A. OGOT, *A Place to Feel at Home A Study of Two Independent Churches in Western Kenya* London: Oxford University Press, 1966, as cited in David B. BARRETT, *Schism and Renewal in Africa*, p 93

49 J S. COLEMAN (see note 12), p 91

Space forbids a statistical presentation of schools even in a select area in Africa to demonstrate that in the primary, secondary and teacher education systems, the missions owned the highest number of schools, especially in the period before 1960. The Government did not begin in time to participate in the establishment of schools, but provided grants-in-aid which supplemented the missions' financing of the schools. Almost as by rule, all primary schools and virtually all teacher training colleges were owned and run by the missions.

It is not only their monopoly of the educational delivery system that provoked nationalism, but also the kind of education they offered the people. To the missionaries, education was viewed as an instrument for evangelization rather than as a tool for socio-economic and political modernization. The result, in Nigeria for example, was that long before independence, governments and individual proprietors began to participate in the provision of educational facilities. And after independence, the nationalist resistence against the Church control of education became even more fierce. Suspecting that the states in Nigeria might one day decide to take control of all schools, some Church leaders began to suggest a "partnership" between the State and Church in the provision of educational facilities.[50]

The takeover of schools by the East Central State of Nigeria in 1970 — an action that was later followed by the other States — had its roots in the nationalist struggle against the Church's monopoly of education.[51]

8. Missionary Historiography

This essay on the negative aspects of missionary activities that produced nationalism in Africa cannot conclude without a mention, however brief, of the way in which the missionaries wrote history. Prof. O. U. Kalu has aptly described that genre of literature as "missionary historiography."[52] This historiography was uncritical, romantic and propagandist in nature. More importantly, it was characterized by an unbridled emphasis on the

50. See, for example, F. A. Arinze, *Partnership in Education Between the Church and State in Eastern Nigeria*, Onitsha. 1965

51. See E. C. Amaucheazi, "The Background to the East Central State Public Education Edict of 1970," *Ikenga* 2/2 (July 1973) pp. 72-82.

52. O. U. Kalu, "Doing Church History in Africa Today," in Lukas Vischer (ed.), *Church History in Ecumenical Perspective. Papers and Reports of an International Ecumenical Consultation held in Basle* (Oct. 12-17, 1981), p. 80

missionary, what he did or did not do. The African contribution to the missionary enterprise was neglected. Social change, the people's pattern of response to the missionary propaganda, the rate and pattern of missionary expansion, and so on, were all explained in terms of the activities of the man who lived in the mission house.

We cannot go into any lengthy discussion of this genre of historical literature. However, only a few of these books may be mentioned here, mainly from Nigeria Fred Dodd's *Tales of the African Wilds* published in 1911 and F. D. Walker's two volumes entitled *Romance of the Black Rivers* and *Call of the Black Continent* published in 1923 readily come to mind Both authors were infatuated with the same popular imagination about the nature of African continent and its people, the dark continent, with black rivers and black hostile "natives." For missionaries to venture into such a continent was a risky business and could be likened to an "invasion" embarked upon for God's sake. Thus H. G. Brewer described his march from Okigwe to the northern parts of the Igbo country, amidst exaggerated suffering, as *Invasion for God*, published in 1944 In 1949, Clanmore and Reynolds in Dublin published Fr Joseph Jordan's *Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria* which extolled the missionary exploits of the Irish Father who arrived in Nigeria towards the close of 1902 and later became a bishop. The book has recently been described as "a calculated propaganda and white-wash"[53] by a vibrant Roman Catholic priest and nationalist historian who has also decried the way in which the author made a "caricature of Igbo traditional religion "[54]

The theme of the "suffering", "courage" and "bravery" of the early missionaries as the backdrop of African "hostility" appeared to be the staple food of missionary historiography. The whole aim was to say how God guided the missionaries amidst an extraordinary amount of suffering through which they went as a result of the "hostility" of African "cannibals" who later became friends through the unseen but unfailing hands of "Providence " Such was the picture painted by some missionaries, especially by Jacob Richards in his book entitled *Cannibals were my Friends* published in 1957

53 I R A Ozigboh, *Igbo Catholicism The Onitsha Connection, 1967 - 1984* Onitsha Africana — FEP Publishers, 1985, p 71

54 *Ibid.*, p 74.

This kind of historiography evoked nationalist reactions which was expressed in the nationalist historiographical literature that began to blossom from the sixties. Its aim was to correct the African historical image badly distorted in missionary historiography; to emphasize the African personality; the African religion; the African cosmological ideas; the ecosystem and indeed, the whole gamut of the African cultural configuration as indispensable factors in the christianization enterprise. In this nationalist revisionist historiography, the contributions of the traditional rulers, the native agents — evangelists, catechists and teachers —, the traders, and so on, in the evangelization enterprise were recognized. In a word, the aim was to rewrite the history of the Church in Africa from the African point of view and by so doing rebuild the African's self-image and the African culture and lead Africans to respect that culture and its heroes.

Again, the literature on this is very extensive. But mention must be made of Roland Oliver's *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (1952); J. F. Ade Ajayi's *Christian Missions in Nigeria* (1965); E. A Ayandele's *Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria* (1966); F. K Ekechi's *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland* (1971), A. J. Temu's *British Protestant Missions* (1972); S. K. Odamtten's *Missionary factor in Ghana Development* (1978), and a host of other works, including journal articles Fired with nationalist zeal the aim of the authors was, as mentioned earlier, to restore the battered image of the past of African nation states and by so doing create in the Africans a sense of worth and of respect for their past heroes — without whom the missionary endeavours would have failed — and the cultures that produced those heroes.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to analyse what may be considered the negative aspects of the activities of missionaries in Africa between 1891 and 1960 and how these activities produced nationalism in colonial Africa. The author shows that many earlier works on the missionary factor in African nationalism, failed to consider these negative activities. Among the most important of these negative activities was the way European missionaries condemned African culture which they did all they could to eliminate. The missionary support of the colonial aggression on

African peoples and their participation in colonizing Africa were also considered factors which fanned the flames of African nationalism. Perhaps, the most important of the negative aspects of the missionary activities that brought forth nationalism in colonial Africa was the way European missionaries refused the African clergy's access to leadership in the mission churches. The removal of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther as the first African Bishop of the Niger Mission and the way European missionaries discredited the Bombay Africans on the Mombasa Coast were given as the most important examples of this trend. The missionary monopoly of education in colonial Africa and the way the early European missionaries wrote the story of the Christianization enterprise in Africa also roused the nationalist fervour.

The paper cannot claim to have said all that should be said in this direction. It has only tried to articulate the most important negative activities. The author is quite aware of the avalanche of literature on the positive activities of the missionaries that produced nationalism, as illustrated in the few examples in the review of related literature

---

Remembering Fr Putz

As we go to press we are reminded that the 23rd February this year is the tenth anniversary of the death of Fr Joseph Putz, for thirty-three long years (1940-1973) Chief Editor of *The Clergy Monthly* which was rechristened *Vidyajyoti Journal* in 1975. On April 30th next is the hundredth anniversary of his birth in Mersch-sur-Alzette, Luxemburg. Fr Putz inspired many generations of priests, religious and laity in India and elsewhere by his sound and open teaching, his careful writing and regular editing of our Journal, his pastoral ministry and his contribution to Vatican II as *peritus*. We make ours the sentiments expressed in the Editorial *In Memoriam* of May 1984 and thank God for the quality of life and work of this faithful servant.

Editorial Board

VJTR 58(1994) 151-167

Indigenous Peoples in the International Scenario

Agapit TIRKEY, S.J.

The International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples in 1993 brought into focus the problems of these ethnic groups that have been marginalised and oppressed in the course of history. The author presents us with an overview of how the problem is seen by the UN and other international agencies, by the Government of India, and in the teaching of the Church, and concludes with some theological issues for further reflection. Fr Tirkey is finishing his doctorate studies in the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi, and is based at St Xavier's High School, 4 Raj Niwas Marg, Delhi 110054.

In the 1982 session of the UN General Assembly, Spain proposed that the fifth centenary year of the voyage of Columbus to the western hemisphere, 1992, be declared an official UN Year of what they called 'The Meeting of the Two Worlds'. An unexpected walkout by the fifty-member African group when the proposal came up for a vote, and their subsequent statement on the outrageous proposal to celebrate the onset of modern colonialism in the UN, a body supposedly established for peace and decolonisation, killed the idea outright. The African reaction was quite reasonable. That 1492 voyage of Columbus was also the beginning of the custom of enslaved Africans being transported across the Atlantic. Slavery had existed a millennium and a half earlier in the Roman Empire, and it was reintroduced in the European civilisation with this event. The institutionalisation of modern colonialism with its overtones of racial superiority was rooted in 1492. In 1988, the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities proposed that the "International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples" begin at the end of 1992, coinciding with

the end of the Second Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. The UN General Assembly endorsed this.

The UN and Indigenous Peoples

The objectives of the UN according to the 1945 Charter are: to maintain peace and international security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to achieve cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedom; and to be a centre for harmonising with the actions of nations for these common ends

During the first years of the UN the difference between "aboriginals, indigenous and minorities" was not clear. On May 14, 1985, Jules Deschenes, Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission for the Protection of Minorities, presented his report entitled "Proposal Concerning a Definition of the Term Minority." This study is extremely important as it defines the meanings and the differences between the concepts of "minorities" and "indigenous peoples." Since then, the confusion is less evident in that the treatment of both the issues has taken separate paths inside the UN system (IBARRA 1993 58)

Who are the Indigenous Peoples?

According to the above-mentioned study, the indigenous populations are defined as

> those composed of the existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them and, by conquest, settlement or other means, reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial condition who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs of which they now form a part under a state structure which incorporates mainly the national, social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant (AREEPARAMPIL 1987.46) [1]

1 In a study on the problem of discrimination against indigenous populations, the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities has given the following definition of indigenous peoples: "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of

A recent UN declaration "recognizes the inherent dignity and the unique contribution of indigenous peoples to the development and plurality of society and strongly reaffirms the commitment of the international community to their economic, social and cultural well-being and their enjoyment of the fruits of sustainable development," and calls on all States "to ensure respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, on the basis of equality and non-discrimination and recognize the value and diversity of their distinct identities, cultures and social organizations" (*Vienna Declaration 1993*).

Therefore, culturally distinct groups that have occupied a region longer than other immigrant or colonist groups are generally referred to as 'indigenous peoples'. Even though there is no generally accepted single definition of indigenous peoples, four principal elements are recognised in the developing of a legal definition, namely, pre-existence, non-dominance, cultural difference and self-identification as indigenous.

The term "peoples" indicated that the indigenous groups had an identity of their own, and a right to self-determination. It reflects better the view these groups have of themselves, and is not disdainful, as the term "populations," which implied a mere grouping, was. Several countries already used this term 'peoples' in their internal legislation, and its use has become accepted in discussions in the UN and other international fora.

The presence of indigenous peoples in the international organisations has a historic precedent in 1923 when the Cayuga Chief Deskaheh, representative of the Iraquois of Ontario, arrived in Geneva, Switzerland. He was the bearer of a passport issued by the authorities of his people and he carried a "petition for justice" addressed to Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary General of the League of Nations. As a representative of the traditional government of the "Six Nations of the Great River," Deskaheh gave conferences and negotiated during one year to explain the situation, the denunciations and the reclamations of his people. Before the Society of Nations, his principal demand was that the league of Six Nations, which he represented, be recognised and accepted as a member of the League of Nations. A refined, consistent and tenacious diplomat, Deskaheh provoked contro-

society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems" (ILO REPORT 1986:27).

versy at the level of the General Secretariat and among the representatives of Canada and the United Kingdom, but gained some sympathy from four governments that at one point were disposed to support his effort, and made friendships among European intellectuals and scientists (IBARRA:49).

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The ILO was born in 1919 but is rooted in the social conscience of the nineteenth century. When World War I came to an end, it was recognised that a global effort was necessary to combat the injurious effects of industrialisation and that there could not be peace without social justice for all workers of the world. As a result, in the Treaty of Versailles the ILO was established, an organisation to set international standards for the protection of the worker and gather information about labour problems of the world (ILO 1978:3). The work of the ILO with respect to "indigenous peoples" began with the studies of "Indigenous Workers" carried out in 1921. In 1926, the Governing Body created a "Committee of Experts on Native Labour" with the objective of elaborating norms for the protection of indigenous workers.

In the early 1950s, the ILO gave considerable attention to the issue of the rights of indigenous peoples. ILO was the only element of the League of Nations that survived the Second World War and later became the first specialised agency of the UN. The ILO created the Andean Indian Programme — an inter-agency, multi-sectoral and multi-country programme in which the UN, FAO, UNESCO and WHO participated. The Programme began with the establishment of action centres in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru in 1954, and was subsequently extended to Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela with the major aim of improving the living and working conditions of the indigenous peoples of the Andes.

In the 39th session of the ILO in 1956 "The Law and Practice Report of the Living and Working Conditions of Indigenous Populations in Independent Countries" was submitted. It gave a detailed review of the activities of international organisations in assisting indigenous peoples, directly or indirectly, principally through the Andean Indian Programme. It also gave detailed information and extended its scope to 'tribal and semi-tribal' population groups whose social and economic conditions are similar to those of indigenous peoples. This went beyond

the narrow anthropological use 'indigenous' to cover all groups living in similar conditions. After a difficult and complex discussion the Convention on the Protection of Indigenous and Tribal Populations No. 107 and its accompanying recommendation No. 104 were adopted with near unanimity in the 1957 session of the ILO. This remains till today the only international instrument adopted by any international organisation for the protection of indigenous and tribal peoples. This Convention came into force on June 2, 1959. India was among the first few countries to ratify it in 1958. Altogether, 27 states have ratified it, 14 of them in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bijoy 1993:1358).

Issues and Problems

In September 1981, an international NGO conference on 'Indigenous Peoples and the Land' was held. It considered the issues of land rights of indigenous peoples, international agreements and treaties, land reforms and systems of tenure, the indigenous peoples' philosophy of land, the transnational corporations and their effects on their resources and land, and the impact of the nuclear build-up on the land and the life of indigenous peoples. In the 1980s, the indigenous peoples created a number of organisations at the national and regional levels.

In April 1981, the Third Assembly of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in Canberra came out with a draft International Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was adopted. In the Fourth Assembly in September 1982, at Panama, the WCIP adopted a further declaration of principles. Other significant developments in the UN in favour of the recognition and protection of the indigenous populations' rights were the two World Conferences to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in 1978 and in 1983 at Geneva. Both of these concerned themselves with the discrimination against indigenous groups and have included concrete measures in their programmes of action.

At the first Conference in particular, it was clarified that indigenous peoples is not synonymous with minorities. Groups should be treated and protected as 'indigenous' or 'native peoples' regardless of whether they constitute the majority or a minority of the total population in the states in which they live. They have their own rights, particular characteristics, traditions, culture and identity which should be protected by international instruments, national constitutions and other legislative and ad-

ministrative measures. The first World Conference urged states to recognise the following specific rights of indigenous peoples: (1) to call themselves by their proper names and to express freely their ethnic and other characteristics; (2) to have an official status and to form their own representative organisations; (3) to carry on within their own areas of settlement their traditional structure of economy and way of life; this should in no way affect their right to participate on an equal basis in the economic, social and political development of the country; (4) to maintain and use their own languages, wherever possible, for administration and education; and (5) to receive education and information in their own languages, with due regard to their needs as expressed by themselves, and to disseminate information regarding their problems and needs (*ibid.*). An important procedure of the WGIP is the full participation of representatives of indigenous peoples and their organisations.

Subsequently, a number of other issues became part of the debate which was to evolve into a draft Universal Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples: the rights to autonomy, self-government and self-determination, to health, medical care and other social services, to legal assistance and protection, to traditional productive activities, to freedom of assembly and association, to social security and the right to trade and to maintain economic, technological, cultural and social relationships.[2]

Throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s, there was a steady increase of criticism of ILO's Convention No. 107. Indigenous peoples and their advocates saw it as seriously flawed. The ILO Convention's basic approach was that it sought that the indigenous peoples should be integrated to the mainstream of soci-

2. In its fourth session in 1986, the WGIP evolved seven draft principles which read as follows. (1) the right to full and effective enjoyment of the fundamental rights and freedoms universally recognised in existing international institutions, particularly the UN Charter and the International Bill of Human Rights; (2) the right to be free and equal to all other human beings in dignity and rights, and to be free from discriminations of any kind, (3) the collective right to exist and to be protected against genocide as well as the individual right to life, physical integrity, liberty and personal security, (4) the right to manifest, teach, practise and observe one's own religious traditions and ceremonies, and to maintain, protect and have access to sites for these purposes, (5) the right to all forms of education, including the right to have access to education in their own languages and to establish their own educational institutions; (6) the right to preserve the cultural identity and traditions, to pursue one's own cultural development; (7) the right to promote intercultural information and education, recognising the dignity and diversity of indigenous cultures.

ety, rather than evolve and develop as distinct peoples. The UN Special Rapporteur Martinez Cobo, the UNESCO and a number of NGOs suggested changes. The ILO General Body then convened a meeting of experts in September 1986 to advise on the possible revision of the convention. The WCIP and Survival International were invited. Many others attended as observers. It was agreed that Convention No. 107 needed to be revised to remove the integrationist approach in it and to reinforce the position on land rights. The revisions were made and adopted as Resolution No. 169 in June 1989.

Another significant development was that the term 'indigenous peoples', which until the 1980s was used in UN and other international circles only to describe peoples in areas where the descendants of colonial powers still form the dominant groups, was broadened to apply to groups throughout Africa (rather than just South Africa), Asia including China, and the erstwhile Soviet Union. The exclusion of indigenous peoples from the African and Asian context, which together constitute about 80% of the world's 260 million (according to other sources 300 million) indigenous peoples (Africa 14.3 million or 5.5% and Asia 190 million or 74%), had not been on theoretical but on political grounds (BIJOY: 1359).

The WGIP presented its first draft of the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 1988, which endorsed the call for the promotion of indigenous societies, cultures and traditions through ethno-development and comprehensive participation, recognised the inalienable rights of ownership and possession of lands which indigenous peoples have traditionally occupied, and acknowledged their rights to pursue their traditional and other economic activities without adverse discrimination and to decide their own future development. The draft was further revised in 1990 and issues like the right to natural endowments, treaty rights, autonomy, self-government, self-determination, etc., were added.

The terms 'autonomy', 'self-government' and 'self-determination' in the draft declaration have irked many nation states. In response, the UN called for a meeting of experts in September 1991 at Nuuk, Greenland, on the issue of indigenous autonomy and self-government, which recognised that indigenous peoples are "historically self-governing with their own languages, cultures, laws and traditions." This meeting held the view that indigenous peoples constitute distinct peoples and societies, with

the right to self-determination including the right to autonomy, self-government and self-identification.

It was hoped that the draft declaration would be finalised in the 11th session of the WGIP in late July 1993 during the United Nations International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples. That has, however, not been possible. It is currently expected that the draft will be finalised by the Working Group in 1994. Then it will proceed through the Sub-Commission, the Commission and the Economic and Social Council before being presented to the General Assembly There will be fights along the way. States like India and Canada are still resisting the recognition of indigenous rights in international law (SANDERS 1993:7)

India's Position on Indigenous Peoples

The sixty million Adivasis constituting 23% of the world's indigenous peoples makes India the country with the largest population of indigenous peoples This 7 9% (1981 census) of our population predominating in 20% of our land mass had their rights to their 'world' diminished into 'rights and privileges' of persons to the forest by the Forest Act of 1927. These were further reduced to 'rights and concessions' by the forest policy of independent India in 1952 when 40-80% of their land were derecognised by law, four to five million people are pushed to destitution because their occupation of lands was considered illegal (they were shifting cultivators and so did not continuously cultivate their lands), and 85% of them officially live below the poverty line (BIJOY 1359). Their history is replete with struggles against the 'colonisers' of their world, which even today has shown no let-up

With the initiative taken primarily by the intellectuals of the Jharkhand Movement, the Indian Council of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ICITP) was formed in 1987 and was affiliated to the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. The ICITP has been a regular invitee in the meetings of WCIP since then. The arguments of the indigenous peoples of India (Adivasis) have been: that the Adivasis of India fall under the definition of indigenous peoples and have been referred to in this way even in various reports and publications of the Government of India; that the human rights of Adivasis enshrined in the Constitution of India have been consistently violated even by the Government; that the Adivasi areas are subject to internal colonisation; that Adivasis are treated as the subjects of colonisers even by the Government

of India; that millions of Adivasis are displaced; that there is a constitutional crisis in the Adivasi areas that has been acknowledged by the official reports of the Government of India, like, for example, the 29th Report of the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The Permanent Mission of India to the UN office has a different story to tell. As early as 1984, the official position of the Government of India in the WGIP has been that there are 'no' indigenous peoples in India.[3] The Indian delegation asserted that indigenous peoples could not be equated with 'Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes', as they are treated by the Constitution for the purpose of positive discrimination to secure for them special privileges and to ensure their accelerated progress on account of their backwardness due to historical reasons. The members of the delegation referred to an Indian sociologist as saying:

> In this country (India), groups which correspond closely to the anthropologists' conception of tribe, have lived in long association with communities of an entirely different type Except in a few areas, it is very difficult to come across communities which retain all their pristine tribal character. In fact, most such tribals show in varying degrees elements of continuity with the larger society of India In India hardly any of the tribes exists as a separate society and they have all been absorbed, in varying degrees, into the wider society of India. The ongoing process of absorption has not been recent but dates back to the most ancient times No tribe in India has a completely separate political boundary (PRASAD 1987:16).

In 1992 the representative of India said that it was then "very difficult" to come across communities which retain "all their pristine tribal character." This "melting pot" theory meant that historians and anthropologists find it very difficult to

3. The spokesman on behalf of the delegation of India made the following statement on August 6, 1987, at Geneva "I wish to state for the record that the term 'indigenous population', according to the understanding of our delegation, cannot be equated with the Tribal or Scheduled Tribe population in India .... The Government of India also does not recognise the right of self-determination of any group of people within India. right to self-determination is applicable in the context of colonial situations or foreign occupation, and not otherwise. India is a mosaic of different religions and cultures .. It provides a micro-cosmos of the multi-cultural and the multi-coloured world. Peoples of many different faiths and persuasions, creeds, religions and ethnic groups have joined together in building the world's largest democracy, a democracy in which civil and political rights are guaranteed to all without any discrimination on grounds of creed or community. For all this variety India constitutes one nation-state and all its constituents are an integral part of the country" (PRASAD 1987:17).

arrange the various distinct cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups in any chronological order (SANDERS: 5).

On the one hand it is said that the tribals had been absorbed, but on the other hand the special programmes to aid tribals and the existence of the tribal majority States in the north-east are noted. Either the "tribals" survive or they do not! The statements suggested that only full-blooded tribals who retain the "pristine" tribal culture were real tribals. If such racial and cultural criteria were applied universally, there would be almost no "indigenous peoples" anywhere. Indigenous or tribal peoples do not lose their character as distinct peoples by adaptation.

In order to prove that the allegation that the Government of India is violating the human rights of Scheduled Tribes is false, the delegation mentioned in foot note 3 pointed out in 1987 to the special attention given by the Indian Government to tribal problems and welfare It stated that Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were not subject to special privation by the Government through development projects The acquisition of land from the citizens through established legal procedures is a practice adopted irrespective of their status, and these are done for the progress of the nation

This statement, however, is far from the truth. For example, Chotanagpur and the Santal Parganas of Bihar alone account for only 2.5% of the total geographical area of the country, but more than 25% of the total mining activity in the country is performed in this small region, and nearly 20% of the total public sector investment in industry is located there (SENGUPTA 1982:11). In the private sector, besides the TISCO and TELCO factories of the Tatas, there are several big, medium and small industrial units located in this region The big dam projects and other developmental enterprises are all located in predominantly tribal lands, displacing their inhabitants to unknown destinies. Thus the progress of the nation is fostered at the cost of the indigenous and tribal peoples who are thus sacrificed at the altar of India's industrialisation and modernisation

To disprove the allegations that India's attitude to Adivasis is colonial, the mission pointed out that members of the Scheduled Tribes have been members of Parliament and State legislatures, and even ministers. They have run governments in States such as Meghalaya, Arunachal, Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur and Nagaland. The Constitution itself prescribes protection and safe-

guards for the Scheduled Tribes some of which are: (a) the curtailment by law, in the interest of any Scheduled Tribe, of the general rights of all citizens to move freely, reside and settle in any part of India; (b) permitting the State to make reservations for the backward classes, including Scheduled Tribes, in public services in case of inadequate representations, and requiring the State to consider their claims in making appointments to public services; (c) reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha and State legislatures; (d) the setting up of tribal autonomy councils and separate departments in the States and the appointment of a special officer at the Centre to promote their welfare and safeguard their interests; (e) the special provision for the administration and control of scheduled and tribal areas (BIJOY:1360).

Article 342 of the Indian Constitution defines tribes as "endogamous group with an ethnic identity who have retained their traditional cultural identity; they have a distinct language or dialect of their own; they are economically backward and live in seclusion, governed by their own social norms and largely having a self-contained economy." This definition falls very well within the scope of the current understanding of the term 'Indigenous Peoples', which has moved beyond the earlier definition of people dominated by descendants of colonisers and has thus become applicable to the Indian context.

India was one of the first signatories of the ILO convention No. 107 of 1957 thus ratifying it, even though the revision No. 169 of 1989 is yet to be ratified by India. And despite the stand taken by India in the WGIP, for the purposes of the UN India's sixty million tribal population has been recorded as indigenous peoples.

In the history of India the phenomenon of the marginalisation of the indigenous peoples starts with the event of a physical invasion by the Aryan people that took place about 1500 B.C., and its second wave in 1100 B.C. Alexander invaded India in 327-326 B.C. but the Greek presence did not last long enough to make any impact. The Moslem raids began in the year 637 A.D. and colonized medieval India by 1030 A.D. and 1206 A.D. through Mohammed Ghazni and Mohammed Ghori respectively (KOSHAMBI, 1975:xxvii-xxviii). The last invasion was by the British who ruled India as a colonial power from the middle of 18th century till the middle of 20th. The Aryan colonising process evolved the caste hierarchical system interwoven with economic and political [illegible]ower exercised under the br[illegible] religious [illegible] phi[illegible]

sophical order. Many indigenous communities were integrated into the Aryan Hindu caste social system, and thereby lost their indigenous social, economic and political structures and their distinct cultural characteristics. But in this story of colonisation and acculturation, a substantial segment of the indigenous population of India remained outside the caste system and in many respects free from the brahminic influence. These are today identifiable as the indigenous peoples of the land, while the rest were submerged into the dominant society in varying degrees, being relegated to the lowest rung of the social ladder.

The ICITP works with the demand that to begin with 'India's Scheduled Tribes' should be equated with indigenous peoples as mentioned in the UN documents. In the WGIP there has lately been the emergence of the ideas that 'dalits', or Scheduled Castes, are also, besides the Scheduled Tribes, the indigenous people of India. Interestingly, the Permanent Mission of India in its reply to the Adivasi issue in the WGIP always clubbed the SC and ST together, anticipating and perhaps hoping for the demand to come up in the WGIP that the SCs also come within the definition of indigenous peoples It is conceivable that this is a game of the Government of India hoping to confound the issue of Indian indigenous peoples in the WGIP and to strengthen its 'melting pot' theory

The Constitution of India provides for autonomy through the fifth and sixth schedules with their provision for advisory and autonomous councils The thirteenth amendment also provides for tribal statehood. These had given and continue to give legitimacy to the various Adivasi struggles and movements for more political power and autonomy Constitutionally legitimate provisions of varying degrees have been granted in many cases after prolonged repression, the latest of them being the agreement for an autonomous Council of the Bodos of Assam

The fear of the Government to accept the existence of indigenous peoples is that this acceptance would mean a ratification of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples making it obligatory for the Government of India to fulfil the demands of autonomy as per the Constitution More such demands are obviously going to emerge in other areas as the process of internal colonisation of Adivasis gains momentum in the wake of the opening up of the nation to other nations of the world Another worry seems to be that more and more people are claiming the indigenous status and are using the World

Bank and the IMF to pressurise India to accept their status.

The term 'self-determination' is another point of contention.[4] In the context of strong, not so strong and weak demands of secession springing up in different parts of the country, the term may appear to mean political separation from the country. The statement of the chairman of the WGIP that while 'self-determination' has many connotations it does not include the right to secession, should put the Government of India at ease (BIJOY:1360).

All these factors make it clear that we have reached a stage in history where the indigenous peoples and the Adivasis have no option but to start addressing their problems politically, outside the dominant political process. The statements made by the representatives of India in Geneva are statements, it seems, that would not be made by politicians in New Delhi. They do not reflect the Indian Government's domestic views and stated policies on tribal matters and culture In 1992 it was clear that the statements made by the representatives of certain other Governments, Canada and the United States included, did not fit with the statements that politicians and Government representatives made at home (SANDERS, 1993:5). The debate on whether the tribals of India are "indigenous" is a debate which has to take place in India and not in Geneva.

The Church and the Indigenous Peoples

For several years now, the Papal teaching has treated the topic of indigenous peoples. Paul VI was the first Pope to visit Australia in 1970 and he told the Aborigines: "We know that you have a lifestyle proper to your own ethnic genius or culture — a culture which the Church respects and which she does not in any way ask you to renounce" (McCOY 1993:4). In addressing the Native People in Manaus in 1981, Pope John Paul II clearly stated:

To public authorities and others responsible I entrust the wishes

4. The right to self-determination has economic, social, cultural and political aspects. In essence, it means the exercise of free choice by indigenous peoples who must give specific content of this principle in its internal and external expressions. It does not necessarily include the right to secede from the State in which they live and to set themselves up as sovereign entities. The right may, in fact, be expressed in various forms of autonomy within the State, including the individual and collective right to be different and to be considered different, as recognised in the Statement on Race and Racial Prejudice adopted by UNESCO in 1978 (REPORT 1986:16).

> which, in this meeting with you, I offer with all my heart for you, whose ancestors were the first to inhabit this land, and who hold a special right to it acquired over so many generations. May your right be recognised to inhabit it in peace and serenity and without the fear — a genuine nightmare — of being displaced for the benefit of others May you be assured of your vital space which will be the base, not only for your survival, but for the preservation of your identity as a human group, as a true people and nation

Three years later, speaking to the native peoples of Canada, the Pope reiterated the position of the entire Church:

> It is clearly the position of the Church that peoples have a right in public life to participate in decisions affecting their lives "Participation constitutes a right which is to be applied both in the economic and in the social and political fields" (*Justice in the World*, no 1) This is true for everyone It has particular application for you as native peoples, in your strivings to take your rightful place among the peoples of the earth, with a just and equitable degree of self-governing For you, a land-base with adequate resources is also necessary for developing a viable economy for present and future generations You need likewise to be in a position to develop your lands and your economic potential, and to educate your children and plan your future

In 1986, the Pope met with Aborigines at Alice Springs and told them "The Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you (the Aboriginal people) have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others" (McCoy).

Since its first 'encounter', the Church has usually defended the indigenous people's right to exist, but only recently mentioned their right "as individuals and ethnic groups, to living space, cultural, and social space" (John Paul II, 1992). The final document of Santo Domingo commits the Bishops to "effectively block or eliminate assimilationist policies of forced integration which cause autochthonous cultures to disappear, as well as the obverse policies which seek to keep native people isolated on the periphery of national life" (*ibid.*)

Some Proposals

The proposals by the bishops of southern Mexico go beyond the geographical borders of their dioceses and provide a global view of the pastoral apostolate among indigenous peoples. A few of their suggestions are:

(i) That native peoples cultivate human values of deep sig-

nificance which the Church defends ... against the sweeping force of the structures of sin manifest in modern society (SD 245, 243). They are the owners of cultural riches which form the basis for their contemporary identity. Values traditionally associated with the native peoples include: a profound awareness of the sacred, respect for nature, closeness to the earth, the sense of contemplation, attachment to the family, responsibility to the community, equality, communal decision making, solidarity, reverence for elders, simplicity, humility, love for freedom, hospitality and joy for living (JOHN PAUL II, 1992).

(ii) From the viewpoint of faith, these values and convictions of the indigenous peoples are the fruit of 'the seeds of the Word' which were already present and operative in their ancestors (SD 245). The inculturation of the Gospel .. presupposes the recognition of these Gospel values (SD 230).

(iii) The native peoples are an example to follow in many areas, for example, in the question of ecology. We should value their wisdom concerning the preservation of nature as the environment of life for all (SD 69). Being poor they teach others how to live with restraint and to share.

(iv) The indigenous peoples should assume the leadership in their own development so as to be the artisans of their own destiny and safeguard the right they have to live according to their identity, with their language and ancestral customs, and to relate in full equality with all other peoples of the earth (SD 251).

(v) The goal of an inculturated evangelisation will always be the salvation and integral liberation of specific people and human groups, to strengthen their identity and give them confidence in their particular future (SD 243).

Some Themes from the Present

During October last year a workshop was organised in Canada for an international group of Jesuits working among aboriginal/indigenous/native/tribal peoples in different parts of the world. The dominant theme which came out of the group was, 'Accompanying Indigenous Peoples'. It was felt that the 300 million indigenous peoples in the world today have a rich contribution to make to the Catholicity of the Church.

The main topics of the workshop were: (1) social justice, particularly in respect to the problems of land (2) evangeliza-

tion as mutual evangelization; (3) inculturation of the faith, specially in respect to ritual; (4) developing an apostolic laity.

Some Issues for Further Reflection

First, in some ways the Church is prophetic in respect to the dominant culture But there is little tradition of prophetism in respect to the indigenous cultures. The Church finds it difficult to be critical of them. This may be because it speaks out of a power base and therefore does not feel confident about criticising. But this prophetic word is something that indigenous peoples have a right to as much as others, especially when the media and consumerism are destroying their cultures How will the Church work with them to facilitate this prophetic challenge? If we want to build up the community and are never critical of a culture, we offer an inauthentic form of support.

Secondly, if everything is Christian, then Christianity loses its distinctive meaning How do we blend the two realities so as to come to a culture truly Catholic and truly Native? This calls us to more ecclesiological reflection.

Thirdly, the most controversial issue is that we are dealing with a profoundly changed soteriology. In the olden days, people went to the missions to save 'pagan' souls! Today we live with a more universalistic soteriology. Why is the Church 'sent'? Is solidarity a sufficient answer? Is there any final or eschatologial meaning in the mission? What do we believe? What is our Christian sense of why we want to go out and be with the people?

Ultimately the question is, Why are we Christian? If a Native spirituality is sufficient for salvation, which we believe, what advantage is there to being Christian?

References

ARETPARAMPIL, M , 1987 "Socio-Economic, Cultural, and Political Situation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in India," All India Consultation on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Affairs. Ranchi. Department of Tribal and Regional Languages, Ranchi University, Morhabadi.

BIJOY, C R., 1993 "Emergence of the Submerged Indigenous People at UN," *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 26

IBARRA, M , 1993 "Annotations for a Chronology of Indigenous Peoples in International Law," *Social Action*, vol.43, January-March.

JOHN PAUL II, 1981 Address to the Native Peoples of the Amazon in the Archdiocese of Manaus, Brazil, July 10

——, 1984. Radio and Television Message to the Native Peoples gathered at Fort Simpson, Canada, September 18.

——, 1992: "Santo Domingo and the Native Apostolate," Document, Bishops of Southern Mexico

KOLVENBACH, P.H., 1993: "Living People, Living Gospel," Talk at Anishinabe, Ontario October 12.

KOSHAMBI, D D, 1975 *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay Popular Prakashan.

McCOY, B., 1993. *Australian Jesuit Indigenous Ministry*, Balgo Hills. Western Australia

PRASAD, J., 1987 Statement on behalf of the Delegation of India in the Working Group on Indigenous Population, Geneva.

REPORT, 1986 ILO-Convention, 1957 (No. 107), Meeting of Experts on the Revision of the Indigenous and Tribal Populations, Geneva, September 1-10

SANDERS, D, 1993· "Indigenous Peoples on the International Stage," *Social Action*, 43, January-March.

SD, 1992. "Santo Domingo and the Native Apostolate," Document by the Bishops of Southern Mexico

SENGUPTA, N, 1982 "Background of the Jharkhand Question," in SENGUPTA (ed), *Fourth World Dynamics Jharkhand*, Delhi Authors Guild Publications

Vienna Declaration, 1993 Vienna UN Declaration and Programme of Action, no 11.

THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

according to the Vatican *Statistical Year Book* for 1991

No of Catholics 92,078,000 (13.85 % of population)
(India 14,585,000 — 1.72 %)
Bishops 497 (India. 146)
Priests 20,768 (India 15,215)
Deacons 290 (India: 26)
Vowed Religious: 50,049 (India· 69,179)
Secular Institutes members: 436 (India: 377)
Lay Missionaries: 1,392 (India: 42)
Catechists: 264,114 (India: 30,719)
Proportion of priests/bishops to total pastoral force: 6.3 %
(India. 13.3)
Catholics per priest: 4,434 (India: 959)
Inhabitants per priest: 8,068 (India: 55,842)
Seminarians & Religious studying Philosophy/Theology· 14,649
(India· 9,113)
Minor Seminarians: 41,478 (India. 9,519)
Proportion of Major Seminarians to priests· 70.54% (India: 59.89)
Seminaries for Philosophy/Theology: 177, and 82 residences
(India 123 and 46)

VJTR 58(1994) 168-176

Bourgeois Priests, Proletarian Priests

A Paradigm from the History of the Conflict between the Church and the Workers

Ulrich ENGEL

On the occasion of a painful anniversary in the history of the worker-priests movement, Prof Engel from Düsseldorf published the following article in *Orientierung* (15.6.1993), a Zürich journal, which Father F Clausen from Pune translated for the Vidyajyoti Journal. *We* are grateful to the Publisher of the original paper for the permission to offer to our readers this account of the events and the lessons they have for our own historical situation The original article ends with a bibliography in German and French.

This year we remember the fortieth anniversary of the day on which the so-called "Worker-Priest Experiment" had to be discontinued due to pressure from Rome Four decades later it looks as if the controversies of those days, especially in France, have subsided but the relation between the Church and the working-class has turned into a non-relation Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the reactionary movement against "atheistic Communism" has declared itself the winner in the ideological contest between socialism and capitalism, and the churches are again withdrawing into the comfortable ghetto of a post-modern bourgeois and conformist attitude The victory seems to be total!

In the following pages I would like to raise the gentle voice of historical memory against the claim of the "winners" and against the danger of a forgetful silence.

In the fifties, the conflict around the French worker-priests caused an international stir For a better understanding of the affair, I give a brief sketch of the course of the controversy.

The Events

The beginnings of the French worker-priest movement may be dated in 1941. In that year Fr Jacques Loew, O.P., started to

live in the port area of Marseilles, in order to labour there as a dock-worker. He writes in his diary:

> In the port piers it becomes day by day clearer to me how inhuman the basic structure of the labour contract really is. It is as if at every moment an aspect of the proletarian existence presents itself before my eyes in its naked reality. Here we also find the other face of capitalism, equally gone to its extreme.

However, soon the Second World War (1939-1945) attracted the attention of all. During the war about two dozen priests, disguised as simple workers, went clandestinely to Germany in 1943-44, in the name of the Church. They were supposed to give pastoral attention (forbidden by the Nazis) to those French workers who had been forced to work in the German armament factories. These clerics came to know the workers' milieu, especially in the barracks of the civil labourers. A group of these illegal pastors, and some prisoners-of-war priests, developed links of solidarity and friendship with activists of the "Résistance" and with members of the Communist Party

A little later, encouraged authoritatively by Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard of Paris, some priests took up residence in the outskirts of the French capital. They tried to win the confidence of the proletarian population. These clerics wanted particularly to prove that they are not financially depending on, and hence manipulated by, unknown phantom high-ups. The main challenge for these pioneers was renouncing their bourgeois outlook.

According to Paul Engelhardt, their concern developed in four stages·

1. The christianization of the proletarian milieu by forming apostolic "cells" (key-word: *community*);
2. An insertion into the working class (key-word. *presence*);
3. An experiential participation in the struggles of the working men and women (key-word: *solidarity*); and
4. Involvement in the proletarian existence (key-word: *"engagement"*).

During the summer of 1945, Rome for the first time showed some signs of apprehension. It nevertheless allowed the project to continue as a "temporary experiment" under episcopal supervision. In 1949 Cardinal Suhard died. From this moment, the fronts hardened, both within the Church and in French society. In 1950 came the promulgation of the Encyclical *Humani Generis* by Pope Pius XII which was read — at least in France — as an

attack against the scientific publications of the Jesuits Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou (both were later made Cardinals!), and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, as well as against the Dominicans Y. Congar and D. Chenu.

In 1952 the discussions became more prominently public. Two publications gave rise to this· one, the article entitled "The Events and the Faith" (*Les évènements et la foi*) written by Maurice Montuclard, O.P , who lived in the south-western suburbs of Paris as director of the "Youth of the Church" (*Jeunesse de l'Église*). This article was branded by his opponents as "radical-left" and put on the Index by Rome. In 1953 this Dominican had to leave his Order The article of Montuclard with its ideas along the lines of the worker-priests thinking was welcomed by them. The second publication met with their disapproval. They rejected the novel of Gilbert Cesbron *The Saints Go to Hell*, above all because of its romantizising tendency. Nevertheless, this book was the occasion of a far-reaching public controversy in the media concerning the "experiment" of the worker-priests.

In 1953, the long tenure of Nuntiature in Paris of Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (later Pope John XXIII) was terminated: the transfer of this Churchman, known for his positive attitude towards the worker-priests, coincided with a deterioration of the overall social climate

The failures of the French army in Indo-China — against the local communist rulers — fostered an increasingly anti-Communist attitude in many parts of the French population In this highly tense situation the official Roman prohibition struck: Rome communicated to the French diocesan and religious superiors its request that the experiment of the worker-priests be stopped. The clerics concerned were given the date-line of the 1st of March, 1954

In the February issue of the Dominican periodical *La vie intellectuelle*, leading theologians of the Order still supported the commitment of the worker-priests. However, the then Master General of the Dominicans, Fr Emmanuel Suárez, O.P , removed about a dozen Dominican worker-priests from their posts shortly before the deadline

> From the end of this month no member of the Order should be worker-priest, no matter of what kind All that is possible should be done for the workers, but always within the limits prescribed and in conformity with the living conditions of a Dominican (Order of 19.2.1954)

A few weeks later the fate of the French worker-priests' mission was sealed.

Disciplinary Action

Besides the prohibition of the Dominican workers' mission, the Dominican "theological brains" behind the enterprise were removed from Paris. Those affected were: the two well-known theologians Yves Congar and Marie-Dominique Chenu, Henri Marie Féret, professor of biblical catechetics at the Institute Catholique in Paris, and the Director of the publishing house *Les Éditions du Cerf*, Pierre Boisselot.

Fr Chenu, who had been till then professor of the prestigious Dominican study centre *Le Sauchoir* in Paris, was for a time deprived of all the privileges and rights which he had enjoyed as a Doctor of Theology. In addition, Fr Suárez suspended all three French Provincials, Fr Albert Avril (Paris), Fr Damas Belaud (Lyon) and Fr Marie Joseph Nicolas (Toulouse): an unheard of step in the whole history of the Order. All French Dominicans were forbidden to leave the country and had to submit all their publications to a previous Roman censorship.

In the same document a request was made to gradually change those Dominicans who were in contact with artists and worked with them, first of all Fr Pie Régamey, one responsible for the periodical *Art sacré*. Fr Ludwig Kaufmann, S.J., rightly remarked in his drastic commentary (in *Orientierung*) that this request manifests how — a disproportionate mistrust in "Rome" (the Pope and Holy Office) had grown into a persecution mania

The events of the year 1954 shook French Catholicism deeply, and for the Dominican Order in France this date also marks the start of a deep cleavage.

But probably thanks to the administrative intervention of the Dominican Master General, the Order escaped the destruction of its democratic structures. According to the most recent historical investigation by François Leprieur, O.P., Suárez acted under pressure· Rome wanted "heads rolling." It was feared that if the Dominicans were not ready to carry out Rome's orders, the Vatican would itself have instituted new Provincials in France, against the whole Dominican tradition Suárez, the diplomat, through an act of "preventive obedience," avoided such an interference by the Roman hierarchy which would have destroyed the democratic structure of the Order.

Historical Background

To understand the catastrophe of 1954 which shook the whole of France, one needs to look back into history.

In 1848, the year of the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the French nation witnessed the first revolt of the workers and its violent suppression. With this, the hopes of the progressive ecclesiastical circles, including Fr Henri Dominique Lacordaire, O.P., vanished. They had pinned their hopes in the "revolutionary democracy" of the Second Republic.

It is only after Vatican I (1870-71) that the "social question" gained significance within French Catholicism. It was then, for example, that Catholic Workers Unions first came into existence. A further impulse to the development of "social Catholicism" came from Pope Leo XIII's social encyclical *Rerum Novarum* published in 1891 The papal policy of *Raillement* ("joining") demanded that the French Catholics should critically join the Republic.

With the separation of State and Church in 1905, the French clergy saw itself facing a totally new situation With no sufficient financial security, many priests were forced to leave their bourgeois milieu. Thus opened the eyes of at least some of them, living in the worker colonies, to the social distress of the workers of both sexes

The "Young Catholic Workers" (*Jeunesse ouvrière catholique*), founded in Belgium, took some foothold in Paris in the year 1927, and shortly after in other French industrial zones. These socially committed groups of lay people found support and backing in some priests as well as in some militant intellectuals who gathered principally around the two periodicals, *La vie intellectuelle* and *Sept*, edited by the Dominican Publishing house in Paris, *Les Éditions du Cerf* But all these factors could not hide the fact that "Catholic France" had turned out to be an illusion. People started to speak about France as a "mission country."

It was specially the famous, or infamous, decree on Communism published in 1949 by the Holy Office that hurt deeply the self-image of the worker-priests. It put the French Church in a difficult situation. This is evident from the reaction of the College of French Cardinals.

> We fully understand the pain which the workers will feel at the condemnation of Communism. We know that the workers saw it

> above all as a party which was active, and was determined to eradicate social injustice .... That is why we are very moved by their sorrow, and we are very concerned to dispel the painful impression that the Church remains indifferent to their anxieties and their hopes. After the decree of the Holy Office, as before, the Church unambiguously sides with them in their social struggle.

The reaction of the worker-priests sounded different. In the so-called "Green Document" which the worker-priests of the Paris zone presented to their Bishop in October 1953, it is stated:

> We are rejected, as the working class is rejected by the present Régime, because we have taken on active part in the workers' struggle. The Church defends, with the majority of her members and her institutions, a Régime against which we will fight together with the working class, with all our strength, because it is unjust and oppressive .. The Church supports this Régime, because in her existential conditions and her institutions she is materially depending on it, with all her charitable intentions

Thus the cleavage between the bourgeois Church and the priests who had grown in the proletarian world of the workers became wider and wider.

We can understand the mounting conflict around the mission of the worker-priests only in the light of the Church's anti-communism. Ecclesiastical circles had understood or misunderstood the workers' mission as a practical declaration of war against atheistic Communism They had expected from the fathers and abbés in the factories a Catholic anti-communist agitation — and were disappointed

Priest in Today's World?

In the context of this conflict, a wide controversy was raised concerning the "priestly mission." The Church hierarchy showed an increasing concern for the "priestly image" of clerics engaged in the industrial world. This can be substantiated by positions taken on both sides. For example, Cardinal Maurice Feltin of Paris presented the missionary image of the priest in his Lenten Pastoral of 1955 as follows:

> The priests must really be present in the world of the workers, and participate in the life of this world, as far as this is possible for a priest, and as far as the decisions of the hierarchy allow them. Nevertheless they must preserve a sufficient independence and objectivity of judgement regarding this world. They must preserve the whole richness of the living priesthood of the Catholic Church with all the requirements which the Church considers as essential

A different viewpoint comes in a text of the collection of documents *Les prêtres ouvriers* (1954), in which it is said, concerning priests entering the working class:

> They can no longer share in a priesthood as it has been shaped in the bourgeois civilization .. They are aware that interiorly they are priests, although this does not yet express itself externally.
> In order to become witnesses of God's revelation in a way meaningful for the working class, they must themselves be newly born into a new expression of their faith, as it issues from their proletarian consciousness In short, they only know that they have to continue the living priesthood of Christ.

These and other controversies led to a growing alienation between the worker-priests and their Superiors

The guidelines published by three French Cardinals a few days after the announcement of the termination of the "experiment," show the centrality of the question "What is the priestly mission?"

> The Church is eager to keep the contact established between the Church and the workers' world by these pioneers, and hence she would like to see that a priestly apostolate in the midst of the workers' milieu be continued by the priests who have proven to have sufficient qualifications But she requests that they take up manual work only for a limited period, so that they are enabled to fulfil all the requirements of their priestly status , they should not take up secular posts which could lead them to be asked to assume Trade Union and other responsibilities which should be left to the laity

Solidarity and Presence

The reaction of the worker-priests was not delayed long. Shortly before the 1st March, 1954, the French Press published a position paper signed by 73 (later 78) worker-priests. In this declaration, addressed to their worker colleagues, they state:

> We do not see how one can forbid the priests, in the name of the Gospel, to participate in the living conditions of millions of oppressed human beings, or to show them solidarity in their struggles.

In Vatican circles Father Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P., was considered the main culprit of the so-called betrayal of the priesthood on the part of the worker-priests The reason was this: even in February 1954 this theologian had written a controversial article about the priesthood of the worker-priests. In his theological reflection Chenu dealt with basic questions concerning the genuine notion of the priestly ministry and the self-image of the clergy. With an eye on the worker-priests he rightly

remarked:

> The priesthood of the worker-priest could only be questioned on the basis of the following (narrow) definition: "The priesthood is a vocation comprising the following essential functions: prayer, the celebration of the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, giving religious instruction and the care of souls."

If one takes these functional characteristics to be the definition of the priestly mission, the conclusion is obvious that the priesthood of the worker-priests must appear as an inferior priesthood. But if one questions the definition then the weight of the question immediately changes. Chenu declares in this connection:

> We cannot doubt that the above mentioned characteristics are constitutive elements of the priesthood in the Church. This is a teaching of faith rooted in the substance of the Church. But we refuse to restrict the priesthood to these sacramental and cultic functions, because they presuppose the witnessing of the faith as the very first act of Christ's Church in the world

Chenu, therefore, stressed the irreplaceable connection between witness (profession of faith) and sacrament. Accordingly, his theological understanding of the sacraments is as follows:

> Without the presence and the profession of the faith, the sacramental functions of the priesthood would have neither a human nor a Christian meaning. The sacraments are literally *"sacramenta fidei"*

This again implies for the priestly ministry that

> if a group of people has come into existence and lives geographically or socially outside the faith and the mystery of Christ, then the first function of the priestly ministry consists precisely in bringing to this non-Christian world the witness of faith and the mystery of Christ. It is only within such a witness that the emergence to the sacraments can take place. Faith is not a precondition which can be simply presumed as obvious but is the first act in which the substance of the apostolic message is contained.

Hence the following priority seems obvious:

> The first function of the priesthood consists, therefore, in giving to the people the word of God, and in giving it to them in the place where they can hear it, where they are.

For Chenu it is self-evident that this argumentation is not arbitrary. Looking back at the earliest Christian tradition, he recalls the traditional order: first comes the kerygmatic proclamation, and after that the catechumenate and the initiation to the sacraments, not vice versa!

According to Chenu, this missionary-oriented sequence has always to be practised whenever the Church faces new unbaptized

worlds. This does not result in a devaluation of the sacraments, because the sacrament will bring to its full realisation the mystery of Christ received by faith: more quickly for one or the other individual, gradually for the human community and civilization with which the priest comes into contact.

These quotations and excerpts from the famous article of Père Chenu show clearly that his intention was to make some contribution to the theological discussion about the nature of the sacraments. We find in it hardly any political or sociological thought. Chenu, it is true, uses the terminology of "France, a mission land" (coined in France) when he pointedly attacks a Catholicism rooted in a self-contented bourgeois milieu: *L'Eglise est en état de mission* — "the Church is in a situation of mission."

This phase of Cardinal Suhard has become a refrain. Let us not water down the clear meaning of the word by, for example, reducing its content to a call for apostolic "zeal," which would make us oblivious of the importance of the theme. It is unavoidable that an established Church in a static Christendom should be taken aback when faced with this new awareness which clearly indicates something of a decay But we should not allow this to smother the apostolic hope regarding the world to which we are supposed to bring the witness of Christ The early Church also had to be shaken by the Holy Spirit to make her bring the Glad News to the world We cannot be satisfied if the missionary task is pushed to the margin of the priestly function, as if it were a secondary duty

Therefore, against an exclusively milieu-protected bourgeois priesthood, the theologian Chenu advocated in clear terms a missionary-keygmatic-praxis-oriented priestly ministry. But by doing this, the courageous Dominican placed himself clearly on the side of the worker-priests We are not surprised that he also had to face disciplinary action.

In spite of its dramatism, the conflict narrated above does not lack in irony, at least considering the numerical aspects Hardly a hundred priests worked in factories till 1954, and were affected by the prohibition decree. Only eleven of them were Dominicans Thirty years later (1984) France had about 450 worker-priests.

Perhaps the controversy around the worker-priests can serve as a lesson for today's increasingly bourgeois Church — and not only in France! ☐

VJTR 58(1994) 177-187

The Theology of Karl Rahner

In Memoriam

Dr Karl-Heinz WEGER, S.J

Ten years ago, on March 30th 1984, Fr Karl Rahner passed away. One month earlier, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, the Holy Father had sent his personal greetings to the theologian "with respect and appreciation for his scientific work." As his thought has had an influence on Indian theological circles, as elsewhere, we are happy to publish this testimony by one of his colleagues and co-author in the work *Our Christian Faith. Answer to the Future* Another of Weger's books, *Karl Rahner, an Introduction to his Theology*, was hailed as the best initiation into the master's thought. His address is Berchmanskolleg Kaulbachstr 33, 80539 München, Germany

Anyone who is a little familiar with the originality and impact of Karl Rahner realises how difficult it is to assess him adequately One of the greatest theologians of our times, his thought and insights are versatile and multi-faceted. I shall restrict myself to the most essential aspects of his theology.

The Starting Point

Karl Rahner's main objective was to overhaul the tradition of neo-scholastic theology. He guided Catholic theology to that aggiornamento which was the agenda of Pope John XXIII. Till the fifties, neo-scholasticism was dominant in Catholic theology and its mentality influenced also other branches like exegesis, Church history, ... Being an exclusively ecclesial subject, scholastic theology was taught mostly in Latin. Wherever it held sway in ecclesial formation centres all over the Catholic world there was a uniform curriculum of theses and "casus." Without ever questioning its own methodology, neo-scholasticism offered clear-cut answers to the themes discussed.

Its approach to modern society was, with few exceptions, defensive and polemical. A courageous and genuine faith ani-

mated this tradition, though one could also detect in it a 're-pressed anxiety. What was lacking was a dauntless trust and a creative elan, as well as a confrontation with the burning problems of the faithful and of contemporary humanity. In short, neo-scholastic theology remained within the boundaries of the ecclesial society, an ivory-tower and apologetic theology, tailored to the social middle classes

Contemporary Man, the Addressee of Divine Revelation

Neo-Scholastic theology suffered from excessive positivism regarding revelation: the message of Christian revelation as enshrined in the Scripture and Tradition, and shaped through centuries of theological thought and moulded into fixed formulas, had to be communicated to the faithful, without any regard for the prospective receiver (or addressee) of this revelation and her or his life-situation and attitudes.

People became more and more disenchanted with such a stereotyped theological approach Rahner gave up this trend. Of course he did not 'amputate' the revelation in Jesus Christ; nor 'adapt' it to the changing fashion of the times But he was aware that the addressee of divine revelation is the human person, a subject of fundamental anthropological experiences which remain constant, and of transient or "epochal" experiences, as Rahner liked to call them He believed that revelation could address itself to the human being in a convincing manner only when these "epochal" experiences were taken into account. Accordingly, his theological thrust developed the anthropological method, i e , an analysis of the thought-pattern of contemporary humanity as the starting-point of the theological investigation.

> Let us look dispassionately at today's real cultural situation. if a modern man who has not been brought up as a Christian hears the words "Jesus is God made man," he will straightaway reject this explanation as mythology which he cannot begin to take seriously nor to discuss, just as we do when we hear that the Dalai Lama regards himself as a reincarnation of Buddha.[1]

Later he says.

> If the *fact* of a verbal revelation (*wortoffenbarung*) were psychologically so absolutely compelling that doubts were utterly impossible, one could impose acceptance of its content in this positivistic

1 "Theology and Anthropology," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 9. London. DLT, 1972, p 40.

manner as a mystery beyond all discussion. But if modern man finds the *content* of revelation unworthy of belief through the fault of theology, he will think himself justified, not illogically, in further doubting the *fact* of revelation.[2]

Rahner advocates a closer link between fundamental theology and dogmatic theology. For, the content of revelation should be proved as the divine self-communication. This implies that we do not give up fundamental theology nor consider it as an isolated theological discipline. Rahner tersely states: "All these difficulties of modern man can be traced to a common formal structure: theological statements are not formulated in such a way that man can see how what is meant by them is connected with his understanding of himself, as witnessed to in his own experience."[3]

This situation has to change, Rahner felt. His theology revolves around the condition of contemporary society — the addressee of the Christian revelation. People do not remain always the same, they are constantly influenced by their cultural milieu (*Zeitgeist*). Obviously, the people of today find it difficult to understand revealed truths which have their origin in an earlier era.

The Transcendental Experience of the Human Person

Religion calls the unutterable mystery of human life "God." Karl Rahner begins his enquiry with the human experience, where we encounter this mystery. God and God's existence cannot be primarily taught by an outside agency (even though our education does that). Rather, the primary place for the knowledge of God and about God is our transcendental experience as human beings.

In this Rahner follows Maréchal, who in turn was influenced by Kant. "I call 'transcendental' all knowledge," said Kant, "which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is possible a priori."[4] For Rahner, 'transcendental' does not signify only the Kantian horizontal knowledge, but also the vertical dimension towards God; for, the condition of the possibility of our knowledge and freedom, though found in us, cannot be from us. Transcendental experience means every ascent-experi-

2. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B.25; see also B.40.

ence in the space-time coordinate, which, as condition of the possibility of being a person, must be always there even though it can be grasped only through reflection. This experience cannot be wished away by denying it or by interpreting it otherwise. The transcendental God-experience is ineluctable.

In Rahner's book *Erfahrung des Geistes* ("Experience of the Spirit") we read:

> In knowledge and freedom man becomes the very essence of transcendence That may sound rather pretentious but it is unavoidable, and what I refer to in these terms, is, in the end, the ultimate ineradicable essential structure of man The movement of the mind or spirit towards the individual object with which he is concerned always aims at the particular object *by* passing beyond it. The individually and specifically and objectively known thing is always grasped in a broader, unnamed, implicitly present horizon of possible knowledge and possible freedom, even if the reflective mind only with difficulty and only subsequently succeeds in making this implicitly present fragment or aspect of consciousness a really specific object of consciousness, and thus objectively verbalizes it
>
> The movement of the spirit and of freedom, and the horizon of this movement, are boundless Every object of our conscious mind which we encounter in our social world and environment, as it announces itself as it were of itself, is merely a stage, a constantly new starting-point in this movement which continues into the everlasting and unnamed 'before-us' Whatever is given in our everyday and scientific consciousness is only a minute isle in a boundless ocean of nameless mystery, that grows and becomes all the clearer the more, and the more precisely, we express our knowing and wanting in the individual and specific instance If we tried to set a boundary to this empty-seeming horizon of our consciousness, we would find that we had already passed through and beyond that very barrier that we sought to establish.[5]

Once again Rahner explains the transcendental experience in the following words

> The form in which it impinges upon us is extremely concrete, even though it manifests itself as the element of the ineffable in the concrete experience of our everyday life While it is unacknowledged and unexpressed in *every* intellectual exercise of our spiritual faculties, it nevertheless manifests itself more clearly and in some sense as an object of enquiry in those episodes in which the individual, normally lost amid the particular affairs and tasks of his everyday life, is to some extent thrown back upon himself and brought to a position in which he can no longer overlook those

5. *The Spirit in the Church*. London: Burns & Oates, 1979, pp. 12-13.

factors in his life which he customarily evades.[6]

More about transcendental experience later on in this essay.

A Revolutionary Idea of Grace

The anthropological bent in the theology of Rahner does not rest content with the implicit God-experience common to all people. He formulated a doctrine of grace through which he influenced modern theology most; and we cannot think of anything that influenced the theology of Rahner as much as the doctrine of divine grace in its full originality and attention. By divine grace Rahner understands primarily the uncreated grace or the self-communication of God to all persons.

In an interview with the *Herder Korrespondenz*, he expressed this view in an exceptionally precise and clear manner. While replying to a question, he observed·

> Transcendental anthropology characterises my theology, right. At one time, grace, divine help (*Gnadenhilfe*) and other preternatural gifts were considered as particular and (so to say) *ad hoc* realities which may completely be absent in the life of a pagan or a sinner. As a theologian, it is my conviction that what we call grace is obviously a reality given by God in a dialogically free relationship, i.e., in a gratuitous and supernatural way Simultaneously, it is also a reality in the inmost core of human existence. Present in knowledge and freedom always and everywhere as an offer, it is either accepted or rejected, so much is man bound to this transcendental character of his being From this view emerges what I call "anonymous Christianity," and what I have specified as "the transcendental aspect of historical revelation "[7]

As this text deals with the main theme of the theology of Karl Rahner, we may further elucidate some thoughts which might be unfamiliar. Rahner proceeds from God's universal plan of salvation (which as such has never been questioned in Catholic theology), i e, not only a general good will hidden in the heart of God who would however set up such hurdles (like baptism!) that many, nay, the majority of humankind will never be able to overcome without being personally responsible for this Rather, the salvific will of God is also always a concrete reality in the individual It is a call of grace and as such the ontic and ontological reality in every human being: as an "offer," the grace of God is a reality in all people without any

6 "The Experience of God Today," in *Theological Investigations*, vol 11 London. DLT, 1974, p. 157

7 Vol. 28 (1974), p 8.

exception. The possibility of salvation of believers of other religions and even atheists is a definite teaching of Vatican II.

Further, Rahner maintains that the human being attains faith only through the help of divine grace. If it is so, then it is not evident why this grace or the divine self-gift is granted only and exclusively at the moment immediately before or in the very act of receiving faith. It is at least equally allowable to presume that the orientation of all people towards the acceptance of revelation in faith (which is facilitated by grace) is a innate state of the human person This is exactly what Rahner calls the supernatural existential of each human being.

The ordinary teaching of the Catholic Church is that no human being, Christian or non-Christian, can be saved without supernatural faith, hope and charity. The question is permissible, how can the non-Christian possess these supernatural virtues and live if not because of a divine self-communication, which is, in Rahner's terminology, "the transcendental revelation"?

Transcendental revelation is that unknown (*ungewusste*) but not unconscious (*unbewusste*) revelation of God, by which he reveals himself to all people We have no experience of the supernatural existential or of transcendental revelation in its purity. It comes along with other experiences in life. In other words, the transcendental revelation always demands an objectivation in rites, cult and doctrine Accordingly, Rahner maintains that he knows of no religion in which God's grace is not at work (cf "the good and true in other religions," Vat II)

Possibly there are difficulties and objections against the concept of anonymous Christianity — we do not go into the details as there are other important questions calling for our attention. If, however, Rahner's considerations prove to be correct, then we could say that every human being has to do with the God of supernatural salvation In this case, the above-mentioned transcendental experience of God is at the same time the experience of the Holy Spirit A lengthy quotation may be allowed here Under the title "Experience of the Spirit," Rahner writes:

> I can now refer to the actual life-experiences which, whether we come to know them reflectively or not, are experiences of the Spirit (As for) the actual experience of the Spirit in the midst of banal everyday life, it can no longer be a question of analyzing them individually right down to their ultimate depth — which is the Spirit .... Only a few random examples are possible....

Let me repeat, though I must say it in almost the same words: where the one and entire hope is given beyond all individual hopes which comprehends all impulses in silent promise,
— where a responsibility is accepted and borne in freedom even though it has no apparent likelihood of success and advantage, ...,
— where the leap into the darkness of death is accepted as the beginning of everlasting promise,
— where the sum of all accounts of life, which no one can calculate alone, is understand by an inconceivable Other as good, though it cannot be 'proven',
— where the fragmentary experience of love, beauty, and joy is experienced and accepted purely and simply as the promise o love, beauty and joy, without their being regarded in an ultimate cynical scepticism as a cheap form of consolation for the final deception,
— where the bitter, deceptive and vanishing everyday chores are performed until the accepted end, and performed with an inner joy and strength whose ultimate source is unknown to us but can be tapped by us,
— where one dares to pray into a silent darkness and knows that one is heard, although no answer seems to come back about which one might argue and reason,
— where one lets oneself go unconditionally and experiences this capitulation as true victory,
— where falling becomes true uprightness,
— where we rehearse our own deaths in everyday life, and try to live in such a way as we would like to die, peaceful and composed,
— where .. (as I have said, we could go on and on)·
there is God and his liberating grace, there we find what we Christians call the Holy Spirit of God. Then we experience something which is inescapable (even when suppressed) in life, and which is offered to our freedom with the question whether we want to accept it or whether we want to shut ourselves up in a hell of freedom by trying to barricade ourselves against it. There is the mysticism of everyday life, the discovery of God in all things; there is the sober intoxication of the Spirit, of which the Fathers and the liturgy speak, which we cannot reject or despise, because it is real.[8]

The Quest for Christology (Die suchende Christologie)

The idea of a "searching Christology" (Christology in the

8. *The Spirit in the Church*, pp. 18-22 (slightly modified)

making!) fits in well with what we have considered so far. Rahner gave the final touch to it in the last years of his life. Quite early, already in his religio-philosophical work *Hörer des Wortes*, Rahner defined the human being as one who expects and must expect within his or her life-span the final and irrevocable Word of divine (supernatural) revelation. This thought is further clarified and deepened by the "searching Christology."

The insistence on a closer link between fundamental theology and dogmatics leads obviously to the postulate that the life, teaching, death and resurrection of the Lord are at least an additional reason among other reasons justifying faith in the legitimacy of the claim of Jesus and of the Christian religion. Jesus' resurrection excepted, the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, the miracles of Jesus, or the holiness of the Church, are not as important now as they were some time ago. Rahner seems to hold the view that modern man finds in Jesus of Nazareth what he has all along been searching. In *Grundkurs des Glaubens* we read

> From what has been said it follows further that Christology in fundamental theology *today* can in three ways turn in a kind of "appeal" to this global understanding of existence which is already "Christian" because of antecedent grace This global understanding cannot be made completely reflexive, but it can nevertheless be appealed to These three appeals have in common the supposition that if a person accepts existence resolutely, the person already lives out in his or her existence something like a "searching Christology " These appeals do not try to do anything but clarify somewhat this anonymous Christology The conviction that this "searching Christology" encounters what it is searching precisely in Jesus of Nazareth, and does not merely "wait upon him" who is to come," this conviction must of course accompany this appeal to the unreflexive and "searching Christology" which is found in the existence of every person With respect to this, we would simply have to ask where else this searching Christology could find what it is searching for, and what it affirms at least as a hope for the future, and ask whether Jesus and the faith of his community does not justify the art of faith that it is in *him* that is found what we always relentlessly seek [9]

This aspect of Rahner's theology of grace seems to be important and promising The three appeals mentioned by Rahner are the appeal for absolute love (which is realised in the love of

9 *Foundations of Christian Faith* London. DTL, 1978, p 295 (translation slightly modified).

neighbour), the appeal for readiness to face death, and the appeal for hope in an absolute future. Such appeals pave the way for "the good news" to touch contemporary humanity in its very situation, so that the truth of the gospel is proved from the content of the gospel itself.

This idea has made no headway in today's theology. To develop it is an arduous task along a perhaps thorny path: to tread this path could be rewarding, though.

An Appraisal of Contemporary Theology and the Church

Towards the close of his life Rahner did not hold contemporary theology (at least European theology) in high esteem. He saw the current theology and ecclesial life as in a "wintry season." The theology of today, according to him, has entered a stage "which is different from the new take-off up to the end of the Vatican Council and a few years after. In that period a new dawn was greeted with enthusiasm, today we could at the most speak of a modest continuation. In this second phase everything has turned pale and a certain resignation has crept in."[10]

Rahner was not a theologian of compromise (or adjustment). He could be critical and prophetic, admonishing and angry, even in respect to the "official Church." Typical of his attitude towards the official Church are the words which he said on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of his religious profession: "I too wish, together with this Church, her faith and sacraments, with her grace, to make a pilgrimage to the eternity of God, an eternity where there will not be anything like a Church, but eternal life in which God gathers all whom he loves"[11]

Rahner, and thus is what many cherish in him, lived what he thought and taught. As his teaching of faith corresponded with his praxis of faith, he was not only admired but loved by many. He bore the burden of faith with others. At the time of Rahner's burial, the then Provincial said quite aptly:

> Like Ignatius, so Karl Rahner in his entire existence was oriented completely to the 'Deus semper major', the ever greater God and His service. This prevented him from ever equating anything else with God, even the Church. His reverent and adoring wonder at

10. "Zur momentaner Situation der kath. Theologie" in *Schriften zur Theologie*, vol. xv, p 80.

11. Unpublished manuscript.

the incomprehensibility of God, whom he confessed throughout as the all-pervading but unfathomable mystery, prevented him — thank God! — from ever trying to capture God in a manageable formula which would enable us to grasp everything, to think we knew exactly who He is, what He thinks and what He wills. .... Rahner had the same reverence for the mystery human beings. Never did he give to men and women, severely tested by life, to the struggling, doubting and despairing flock, pious but empty and irrelevant answers to their afflictions and questions, even when they were questioning God Therefore, and because of his respect for every person and his or her questions, he was a true companion, a co-pilgrim who was able to lead others to faith. Searching and suffering people took him seriously because he did not condemn them in the name of some Magisterial pronouncement or even dogmatic principle Father in faith, brother in faith, witness of faith — that was Karl Rahner [12]

Concluding Remarks

In this article we have identified a few basic themes of Rahner's theology. Through this theology he has contributed much towards the updating of sterile neo-scholasticism He has been helped by what he himself termed a "transcendental anthropology" Crucial for Rahner was the consideration of the spiritual condition of the modern person, whom the gospel has to reach. In this context, he felt, the positivist understanding of revelation has to be discarded

As regards the question of God, Rahner refers to the transcendental human experience. In the conscious acts of daily life the human being goes through an ascent-experience, the experience of an unutterable and indescribable mystery of life, i.e., God, first spontaneously, but on reflexion seen as the very condition of the possibility of being a subject.

Above all, the doctrine of grace is the core of Rahner's theology Even though it is imaginable that there would be only a natural revelation, in fact according to His universal plan of salvation God has revealed Himself to all peoples, not only through a historical-textual revelation (and ultimately in Jesus Christ), but also through the innate state of the human spirit, which Rahner calls the "supernatural existential" or the transcendental revelation of God Because of the revelation of the historical and universal salvation, Rahner is convinced that every human be-

12. See *The Jesuits*. Year book of the Society of Jesus 1985, p. 14, and *Ignis* 85 (XIV/1) Jan-Feb. 1985, pp 33-4

ing searches for God's ultimate and historical promise of salvation, that every one is in search of a Christology.

In his involvement with the people, Rahner not only taught theology and designed a theological system, but also lived a life of authentic witness to his faith, in word and deed. ❑

Correspondence

The Compassion of God

Dear Editor,

By this letter I want to congratulate Dr George Therukattil of Mysore for his excellent four articles on the Compassion of God, as have appeared in a series in your esteemed JOURNAL, in the September to December issues of 1993.

The said articles will be a means of stimulation and blessing to many workers of Christ. I wish, however, the learned writer had thought of devoting one full page at least, if not more, to illustrate the compassion of God in redeeming perishing sinners from death into eternal life. He is clear on this score in his mind, I am sure, but he has rarely hinted enough about it in his good exposition.

It is no secret that, in the mainline Church denominations particularly, there are a good many priests and pastors who, under the influence of western theology, are bereft of the inner experience of the saving power of Christ and who might further be strengthened by this omission in their belief that compassion for the poor and the oppressed is the total Gospel. The author's observation on page 520 of your Journal that *"Jesus' theology was a theology of compassion"* is beautiful if it would make it plain that compassion refers to both the spirit and the body.

The conclusion arrived at by him at page 740, towards end of the series, again leaves us dry in this regard. The comparison of a Christian priest with a Bodhisattva is interesting; nevertheless, the Bodhisattva has little or no knowledge of the compassion of God which comes down to save the sin-sick soul from his or her bondage, in this life and the life to come.

I am of the conviction that the spiritual and the social aspects of God's compassion should be held together in a very balanced way just as we find them in the life and teachings of the Master. Not one at the cost of the other. Christ preached also enough on sin, hell, repentance, new birth, and eternal life, as maintained throughout the New Testament. "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and lose his very self?" Thank you for giving us this series.

Yours truly,

P.O.Bhowali; Acharya D.P. TITUS
Dist.Nainital. U.P. 263132

VJTR (1994) 189-191

Listen to the Spirit

"I am the Lord who heals you" (Ex 15:26)

April 7: World Health Day

The World Health Day invites us to reflect as Christians on human health and wholeness. It is important to do so because, like most other spheres of human life, sickness and health have emancipated themselves from their religious associations in the past. The doctor in a modern hospital has no resemblance of the medicine-man of the past; his work has nothing to do with witchcraft and superstition which used to be connected with illness in old traditions (though many of them are still much alive in sections of our society, and not only among uneducated groups). Hardly in any sphere of development has scientific research been as successful as in the art of healing (perhaps with the tragic exception of the art of killing and destroying!) The separation of the various branches of medicine from their religious roots has proved extremely fruitful and beneficial for the human family.

What, then, is the place of healing in our faith? Have the Bible texts which speak of Yahweh as healer still meaning for us? "I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord who heals you" (Ex 15:26). We feel reluctant to place such powerful texts simply in the category of antiquated and mythological language and to write them off as irrelevant in our scientific age.

While we readily and with gratitude recognize the astounding progress of modern health services, we also realise ever more clearly that health is not a matter of science and technology alone. Health concerns the entire person in all dimensions of human life: body and mind, our physical condition and economic situation, personal life and social environment. Health and wholeness of the individual person cannot be seen apart from a healthy society, from the wholeness of God's creation. Wholeness comes from God and pervades every sphere of human life, of our world.

From the beginning God wanted us to be whole: he gave us life and planted a garden for us with trees that were pleasant to the eyes and good for food (Gen 2:9f). In the Bible sickness is seen as an evil which has no place in God's original plan of creation. Illness is connected with sin. God sends it when the people are unfaithful to him (Deut 28:20-22). In the post-exilic view illness is considered the work of hostile spirits who wield power in our earthly sphere. In the glorious vision of the new era the prophets describe a world which is free

from all destructive forces: "The Lord will swallow up death for ever and wipe away the tears from all faces" (Is 25:8).

For Jesus the healing ministry is the manifestation of the dawn of God's reign. The evangelists put together the healing of diseases and the exorcisms of evil spirits. Mark describes the first day of Jesus' ministry in Capernaum: he exorcised a man in the Synagogue, and in the evening, when the people placed all their miseries before him, "he healed many who were sick with all kinds of diseases and drove out many demons" (Mk 1:34). His work is summed up by Peter: "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). Significant is his persistent practice of healing on the Sabbath, to the annoyance of his adversaries; he is concerned not with legal subtleties in the observance of the Sabbath rest but with the revelation of God's healing love and power.

The way in which Yahweh is presented as healer, and Jesus' healing ministry is narrated, must be seen in the wider context of the biblical vision of the world: the whole of creation is totally dependent on God, all events are — in a simplified perspective – explained by divine causality. In the healing process only the most obvious natural helps are mentioned like soothing oil on the wounds or a bandage on bruises. Only gradually is the importance of secondary causes is recognized. The exhortations of Jesus Sirach read like the transition to a modern approach to health services: "Honour the physician ... the Lord created him, for healing comes from the most High .... The skill of the physicians makes them distinguished .... The Lord created medicines from the earth and the sensible will not despise them .... By them the physician heals and takes away pain. The pharmacist makes a mixture from them, God's work will never be finished; and from him health spreads all over the earth ... There may come a time when recovery lies in the hands of the physicians, for they too pray to the Lord that he grant them success in diagnosis and in healing, for the sake of preserving life " But also the conversion to God is demanded: "My child, when you are ill do not delay but pray to the Lord and he will heal you. Give up your faults and direct your hands rightly and cleanse your heart from all sin. Offer a sweet-smelling sacrifice" (Sir 38.1-15).

On these lines we may reflect on the highly developed health services of our time. God is the source of all health and healing, but he uses medicines and physicians to impart his healing care on our sufferings. Today we could extend the list of these secondary causes through which God's life-giving power is at work in our world They are spread over the whole creation sunlight, pure air, springs of healing waters, salts and minerals hidden in the depth of the earth, innumerable plants, their flowers, leaves and roots, holding secrets of healing of which our ancestors knew more than we do. Most of all, God has given us brains and ingenuity and the urge to search for the cause of diseases, to find means to prevent them, and to check their destructive powers. He ve

us also compassionate hearts and tenderness to soothe throbbing pain and to hold the hand of people who drift into loneliness. God has done more: He has planted into every living being the desire to live, the elementary instinct of self-preservation. Not only do instincts protect our life but a defence system is built into every organism: we have learnt today what the immunity system means and the catastrophic results of its failure.

Healing powers are built also into our community. There are people who through their word and touch can communicate vital energies. Such forces are at work especially in communities of living faith — they were alive in the early Church from apostolic times and have been rediscovered in our days The loving, living support of a praying community is a powerful force for healing An atmosphere of confidence flowing from human hearts is infectious and can remove blocks which prevent the free flow of life Pilgrim centres become places of healing God's power and love are the ultimate cause of every process of healing, but the channels through which this power flows are as numerous and varied as his entire creation

We must return to our initial reflection that the development of modern medicine is connected with its emancipation from its association with supernatural powers and that this emancipation was actually the condition for its enormous growth and success Our faith that God is the origin and cause of all life and healing has nothing to do with an unhealthy mixture of faith and superstition, but also it does not allow us to live with a dichotomy between God and the secular realities We recognize the validity of the scientific approach to secular realities. But the entire universe has its origin, meaning and goal in the all-pervading mystery of God God is not outside the world· the entire creation is only the veil of His presence So there are two dimensions in encountering the world the observation of the tangible reality, registering its movements — the scientific approach, and the deeper vision, open to the eye of faith, by which we encounter God's hidden presence The hidden depth is more important than the surface We have analogies in daily life: the small flower which I find in my room is greater than the entire flowering bush in the garden outside because it is the sign of a loving welcome This love is not an illusion, it is the one thing which makes life worth living, though it cannot be seen nor really proved. So is with God's loving presence We know of it in faith, and the mystics experience it intensely St John of the Cross writes about religious pictures: "Where there is faith and love any religious picture is sufficient (to encounter God), where they are absent no picture helps."

The same can be said of the world of healing· if I believe in God's loving care I find Him present in doctor and nurse, medicine and injection, prayer and blessing — different in each of them yet blending them together, all instruments of His healing power. I need not make efforts to calculate how much of the healing process belongs to each of them.

At times the immediate impact of God seems to be more conspicuous. In a canonization process, or in the assessment of a pilgrim centre, professional efforts are made to prove that a particular cure was truly miraculous, i.e., caused by God immediately and without intermediary instruments. Probably all such calculations remain relative, in view of the ever-growing insights into the workings of nature. But for actual life, are such inquiries really important? If among a thousand cures in Lourdes one is declared a real miracle, does it mean that all others are illusion? It seems more important to be aware of the all-pervading healing presence of God in our world and to experience his love through all channels of human life.

God gives life and heals — but we cannot brush aside the anxious question asked from the very beginning of human history: Why does He allow suffering, pain, evil? No adequate answer will ever be given to this question, and even Jesus gave no answer. Instead of satisfying our curiosity he has shown us the way that leads us through darkness and pain. But one common misunderstanding he has corrected, the one that too easily connects suffering, and mainly disease, with sin. He meets a man who was born blind and the disciples ask him: "Who has sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus rejects the insinuation of guilt: the man is blind "that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (Jn 9:2f). The "works of God" — the manifestation of God's love which comes to us in Jesus — became tangible in the cure of this blind man. The same love is unfolded and multiplied all over the world in every Christian life — and thus has a particular significance in our world of increasing isolation and individualism. It does happen in good families that a case of illness becomes the occasion of closer togetherness. A handicapped child may be rejected — or it may become the centre of special affection and love. As long as all keep well we are in danger of drifting into the superficial well-being of a consumer mentality where the awareness of the deeper meaning of life remains stunted. This awareness is awakened when we meet with suffering.

We may also reflect on modern health services It is true that they often have become a business; yet, how much compassion and love, humble service and self-sacrificing devotedness have grown at the bedside of the suffering in the vast army of health-personnel, doctors, nurses, relatives, friends. Health remains the sphere in which the best human qualities can grow. We may look even further into the disasters of natural calamities, epidemics, famines For many, these become the occasion to be shaken up from self-sufficient comfort, to reach out to those in need: "God's works are revealed." Throughout history God's healing power and love have become tangible in our suffering world.

The World Health Day, day of healing: may every Christian on this day listen to the Spirit and look at her or his special opportunities to have a share in the revelation of God's healing love in our world.

J. NEUNER, S.J.

VJTR 57(1994) 192-199

Review Article

The Social World of Matthew's Gospel and Community

One of the consensus points of Matthean studies till recently has been that the Gospel of Matthew was written in conscious opposition to the emergence, at he council of Yavneh (Jamnia), of Rabbinic Judaism as the controlling and defining group within Judaism in post-70 CE. Here, Rabbinic Judaism, under the leadership of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, was believed to have defined the Jewish identity anew along the Pharisaic-Rabbinic lines, in an attempt to ensure the continuity and unity of Judaism Mainly articulated by W D Davies in his seminal study, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, this understanding has held sway for long But recent studies have progressively shown that this account of what transpired at Yavneh needs serious revision and nuancing The Rabbinic stories about Yavneh are seen to be stylized, having the nature of a foundation myth (*Gründungslegende*), embellished and read back into the past, to explain the Rabbis'role in later Judaism and to legitimize their gradual emergence as authoritative teachers

Surely, the legendary figure of Johanan ben Zakkai was associated with Yavneh and established a school there and thus initiated a process of social reconstruction within Judaism But there is no evidence of anything like a council taking place The social definition and the evolution of the viable institutions which expressed it demand a long and protracted period and certainly could not have taken place overnight in a council The story has only symbolic value in pointing to the "beginning of the end of Jewish sectarianism " While this nuanced position of what took place at Yavneh is the result of more recent scholarship, the book of Andrew Overman places itself within this context [1]

Overman's work is basically a sociological study of the social world of the Matthean community It utilizes the perspectives of the sociology of knowledge which holds that the social construction and developments evident within a community are shaped and provoked by developments and events within their "life-world" or within the "horizon"of the community Employing Max Weber's concept of the routinization of charisma, it shows how the social world of Matthew

1 **Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism. The Social World of Matthean Community** By J Andrew OVERMAN. Minneapolis. Fortress Press, 1970 Pp. ix-174. $11.95. ISBN 0-8006-2451-3

has been constructed in response to the day-to-day problems that arose out of its life-world defined by Formative Judaism.

Formative Judaism refers to the slow emergence of a coalition within Judaism in the period following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. It aimed at a religio-cultural synthesis and process of social construction for giving Judaism a new identity. It thus denotes a unifying process within Judaism for its survival. This coalition grew out of a concrete history of sectarian movements in Judaism which characterized it not only in the post-70 period but even much before, from 165 BCE. During this extended period several Jewish sects of different inspiration arose ,such as the Qumran movement, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, Jewish Christianity, apocalyptic movements like the communities behind 1 Enoch, Psalms of Solomon, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch

Among all these the Pharisees were best poised to respond to the critical post-70 context. With their stress on the Law, their well developed system of beliefs and practices and organizational structure which did not presuppose the temple, they were naturally suited to undertake a leading role in the situation Hence the Pharisaic movement along with the scribal profession gradually emerged as the most significant driving force within Formative Judaism, although they were not its only constituents.

One should not, however, construe this situation as the direct beginning of Rabbinic Judaism. The Pharisaic movement has links with the Rabbinic Judaism, beginning in Galilee after 135 CE. but at the earlier stage it is not this sort of Rabbinic Judaism that we witness Formative Judaism underscored the fact that Judaism is in the process of becoming It took a long time, several centuries, before this process created a dominant form of Judaism represented by Rabbinic Judaism At best one can speak of its *remote* beginnings in the post-70 period The slow unifying development and institutionalization of Formative Judaism in this period must be thought of as a coalition of forces. Several streams flow into this coalition, even if the Pharisaic-Scribal stream may be the strongest

Overman maintains that, initially, the Matthean Community also formed part of this coalition represented by Formative Judaism. But slowly it perceived itself to be different, as Formative Judaism became increasingly dominated by the Scribal-Pharisaic strand. This created a situation of confrontation and competition between these two Jewish movements. In Overman's view, the developments and issues that characterize Matthew's Gospel are defined and dictated by this confrontation and competition. Both these movements are wholly Jewish and are fiercely engaged in the struggle for Jewish identity. Both movements claim to be the "true Israel" and their points of contention surround the same set of issues and concerns. And hence what Matthew does is not to define Christian identity over *against* Judaism, as Davies thought. This is where Matthew's Gospel differs so radically from Mark and Luke, both of which define Christian identities quite inde-

pendently of the Law and Judaism. Matthew's Gospel, by contrast, claims to be the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets and his movement the true Israel.

The Jewish sectarian communities of the period mentioned above, according to Overman, manifest a number of striking common characteristics. These include their minority status in relation to the parent group, their hostility toward the prevailing Jewish leadership, their specific attitude toward the Law because of which the Law becomes "the common ground and the battle ground," and their position regarding the future of the covenant people Literature from these communities analyzed by Overman clearly demonstrates these common features for all the movements discussed They understand themselves as the holy remnant and distance themselves from the dominant group, which, they believe, has perverted the authentic nature of God's people. Their hostility towards the leadership group is based on this and is often expressed in typically explosive language of denunciation. Their interpretation of the Law is crucial, as they base their self-understanding and their portrayal of the leadership group on it They are the true observers of the Law, while the parent body has betrayed the Law and its spirit In this situation, they naturally see themselves to be true future heirs of the Covenant community, while the faithless leadership group are fated to be rejected

Overman demonstrates how Matthew shares in all these aspects that characterize these sectarian movements and how the Gospel is replete with them The conflict in the Gospel with the Scribes and the Pharisees, which looms large throughout, must be placed and understood in this context, in particular passages such as 21 43, 27.25 and ch 23 Not only the Matthean Community's self-understanding as a community of the righteous and its denunciation of Jewish leadership but its understanding of the Law based on Jesus' radical interpretation of it, sharply contrasting with the legalistic position of the Scribes and Pharisees and its consciousness of being the true Israel, are all directly related to this social horizon of Matthew

It is, of course, possible that sectarian groups, given their contrasting claims, would provoke conflict and competition among themselves. But this would happen more easily and acutely between such groups and the parent group This is what we see happening in Matthew's Gospel. Matthew's Community is engaged in the fierce struggle for the identity of Israel, but it does so over against Formative Judaism

As Formative Judaism gradually grew, it developed institutions. An important development in this connection was the growth of the figure of the Rabbi as an authoritative functionary. Moreover, it evolved rules of expulsion and community definition and defence. It also ensured ways of legitimation by appealing to tradition and the Law and developed the synagogue as a place of community gathering. As Formative Judaism grew into a dominant group through all this and more, the Matthean Community responded to the situation in similar, paral-

lel terms. Matthew's Community, thus, developed its own leaders conceived essentially as teachers and scribes that rival the Rabbis. It constructed community rules for regulating its life along the same lines, with leaders having powers to expel offending members and with authority both spiritual ("forgive sins") and civil ("to bind and to loose") analogous to that of the Pharisees. Similarly, it developed its own gathering place, "the ekklesia," rivalling "their synagogue." Matthew's portrait of the disciples resembles very much the image of the Jewish leaders, especially with its stress on the teaching function. Even Matthew's attacks and diatribes against the Scribes and Pharisees have a relevance in this connection. In them they are in many ways depicted as the counterfoil of the disciples and represent what they should not be.

Overman sees in this context the image of Peter, particularly emphasized in Matthew, as being singularly instructive. On the one hand, he is like the divinely inspired agent of God found in all sectarian communities as interpreters of the word and message of God (e.g., the Teacher of Righteousness, Baruch, Enoch, Ezra, Jeremiah and other figures in different sects of Judaism); on the other, he rivals the claims made by the dominant leadership. Besides, his role helps to legitimate the role of the community leaders in Matthew. Besides, for Matthew too, as in Formative Judaism, Law and Tradition are the means of legitimation, though, of course, his understanding of these are based on Jesus' radical values and reinterpretations. Hence the constant reference to the Law and the Prophets, and scriptural quotations with their modernizing interpretations which are so characteristic of Matthew

This parallel and competitive development emphasizes the Matthean Community's claim to be the true Israel in relation to Formative Judaism and it leaves no room for compromise or reconciliation. Matthew's Community makes the same claims, stresses the same authority and tradition and even has the same type of roles as Formative Judaism The Matthean Community claims to be the true fulfiller of the will of God as opposed to the Jewish leadership. They are two rival claimants to Jewish identity and as such represent "twin alternatives" for the people of this period. But Formative Judaism increasingly emerged as the more dominant force, acquiring greater power and influence within the wider Jewish community. At the time of the writing of the Gospel, the Matthean community was losing ground to Formative Judaism.

From this picture of Matthew's setting Overman deduces the following conclusions about Matthew's Community and its world. Firstly, Matthew's Community, although initially about the same size and shape as Formative Judaism, increasingly constituted a minority compared to Formative Judaism. The harsh and explosive language used against the Jewish leadership points to this. So also "the cautious and at points hostile response"(p.154) to the world indicates its sectarian nature. As a consequence, the Community is more interested in world maintenance and community formation than world transformation, unlike

the communities of Mark and Luke. Matthew seems to nurse a mistrust of the institutions of the wider world, like the courts and related authorities. Perhaps, this may also be linked with the clout the parent group seems to have had over these In relation to the Roman authorities and provincial powers, the Jewish leadership appears to be on friendly terms and seems to enjoy support and *de jure* authority for their position. In Galilee, Formative Judaism and its leaders represented by the Pharisees might even have shared a degree of actual political power What is more important for Matthew's Gospel is the fact that Formative Judaism appears to be gaining popular support. Some in Matthew's Community even seek to emulate their ways. For Overman, Matthew's explicit warnings against the manner of the Scribes and the Pharisees point to this. If Matthew offers such systematic and reasoned defence of the beliefs of his community and mounts such a virulent attack on the Scribes and the Pharisees, it is precisely to offset this process. The Matthean Community faces the challenge of Formative Judaism by developing analogous institutions and roles which uphold its understanding of the Law and its relevance to life based on Jesus' teaching and praxis. In doing so Matthew maintains that it is only his community that teaches and lives the Law and the Prophets and thus truly fulfills them and consequently constitutes the true Israel.

Regarding the composition of the Matthean Community, Overman contends that given the preponderance of Jewish issues in the Gospel, its consistent preoccupation with the identity of Israel, and its understanding of the Messiah as the fulfiller of the Law and the Prophets and not its destroyer, it must be overwhelmingly, perhaps wholly, Jewish in composition The slur on the Gentiles and on other nations, even if this is a fixed formula (5 47;6 7,18·17), also argues in favor of such a situation The absence of any discussion of the problem of circumcision which a mixed community would most likely give rise to, also points in the same direction, though this is an argument from silence

Yet it is a community which is becoming open to the Gentile world, as 21:43 and 28·19, in particular, indicate Overman thinks that it is probably the hostility and antagonism that characterized the relations between the Matthean Community and Formative Judaism, coupled with the poor response Matthew's message received among fellow Jews, that caused this turning to other peoples where it hoped to be better received

From this delineation of Matthew's setting Overman ventures a hypothesis about the provenance of the Gospel which significantly departs from traditional positions (Antioch, Syria). While certainty is not possible here, in view of the Matthean Community's life-world of struggle with Formative Judaism a Palestinian origin for the Gospel seems well assured, since both Formative Judaism and the later Rabbinic Judaism originated and held sway in Palestine. Within Palestine

itself, Galilee can be further specified as the place of origin because of the dominant role it had in early Rabbinic Judaism and because of Matthew's consistent concentration on Galilee. The ministry of the Matthean Jesus is essentially concentrated in Galilee, in particular Capernaum. Also, the Scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus' steady opponents in the Gospel, are essentially limited to Galilee. This seems to be a reflection of the actual social world of the Matthean community.

Within Galilee itself, Matthew's language and imagery points to a city where the two communities of Formative Judaism and Matthew's Community could have existed side by side Both Sepphoris, three miles north west of Nazareth, and Tiberias, on the western shore of the sea of Galilee, are possible candidates. Both cities were, at different times, the seat of the Sanhedrin in the first century, according to Josephus, and both were large and sophisticated enough for a Gospel like Matthew's Of the two, Overman tends to support Sepphoris as the place of origin because of the significant role it played in nascent Rabbinic Judaism, a fact we know from history

Overman contends that Matthew's Gospel, more than any other New Testament literature, reflects the shared history of Christianity and nascent Rabbinic Judaism They are "fraternal twins" and the intense rivalry, struggle and antagonism between them discernible in the Gospel are part of the history of their mutual development and self-definition For a period at least, they grew and developed over against each other. Because of this common ground, they cannot be understood and treated apart from each other. This fact has relevance and lessons for both Christianity and Judaism even today in their mutual relations.

Overman's study of Matthew's social world, applying the perspectives of the sociology of knowledge, is systematic, detailed and convincingly argued, using as it does, the latest scholarly data on Formative Judaism. It has certainly illumined the social setting of the Matthean community considerably, compared to other studies on the topic up till now. The high praise that important Matthean scholars like W D. Davies and Jack Dean Kingsbury and experts on Formative Judaism like Anthony J. Saldarini have given to his book also bears this out.

The work, while essentially a product of the sociological approach, also combines insights from historical-critical methodologies as well as literary and philological exegesis at points, and thus exemplifies, in some measure, the efficacy of such an open-minded approach. While one must admire and agree with much of what Overman contends, the following observations seem to be in order.

The issues and developments one sees orchestrated in Matthew's Gospel certainly have to do with the Matthean community's struggle with Formative Judaism for Israel's identity. And while the Matthean community resembles in several respects the attitudes and positions of

sectarian movements in the Judaism of the time, it seems to us that not everything is adequately explained when this is said. There are a number of specificities in the Matthean community which mark it off as unique. Most important in this connection is the Jesus event, his ministry, claims and his rejection and crucifixion, which created a crisis of conscience in Israel at the time, especially in the light of the claimed Resurrection experience of the disciples and the emergence of the Christian movement which grew steadily in Israel and outside. The impact of the personality and ministry of Jesus, his interpretation of the Law and the Prophets, based on the radical love of God and love of people, his ministry of compassion which exemplified it, the personal authority with which he taught, all these provided the Matthean community with a unique source of strength and power which other sectarian movements, including the eventually dominant Formative Judaism, lacked While a few of these factors are mentioned by Overman as background influences, not all of them are considered, nor in the depth in which they should be, as determining influences for the Matthean community. Perhaps more important in this connection is the experience of the presence of the risen Jesus in the midst of the Matthean community which powerfully accentuated the sense of the Community's uniqueness and this expressed itself in a missionary consciousness both in Israel and perhaps outside This means that Matthean Christianity, like other forms of early Christianity, was forward-looking, missionary-minded and universalist, even while remaining for a period strongly Jewish and concerned with Jewish issues as well Matthew's openness to the Gentiles and the Gentile mission (21 43, 28 19) cannot be adequately understood as purely provoked by the failure of his community's message on the Jewish home front, though this may have also played a part in it. Basically, it follows a maturing of the forward-looking dynamism of the Matthean Community with its vibrant resurrection faith which, despite all opposition, confrontation and failure, grew in its universalist vision

That openness and sense of universal mission and the positive attitude towards the future is partly highlighted not only by the texts mentioned above but also by the Infancy Narrative of Matthew, which has elements of openness to the Gentiles and in many ways has a proleptic character with respect to the wider Gospel of Matthew Significantly this sort of dynamism and positive orientation to a universal future is totally absent in all the other forms of Jewish sectarian movements which Overman considers.

For this reason it is incorrect to characterize the Matthean Community as cautious and at points hostile to the world and withdrawing and mistrustful of it While signs of caution and even distrust and hostility to the world may be found, these may well be related to Formative Judaism's clout and connection with the institutions and powers that constituted Matthew's world, as Overman partly concedes.

However, side by side with this, Matthew's Gospel also shows an inner dynamism and future orientation that points to its interest in taking on this world, in and through a community formation and universal mission.

Precisely because of this dynamic factor in the Matthean Community, it does not seem to us to be correct to oppose community formation and world-transformation in Matthew and to say that Matthew is more interested in community formation and world maintenance than in world transformation (p.154). Matthew seems to be aiming at world transformation precisely through community formation The Sermon on the Mount where Matthew systematically presents the ethics of the Messianic Community also highlights its world-transforming role in telling images such as "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world" and "a city set on a hill," all of which have a pointedly world-transforming import precisely through the radical life of the messianic community, constituted by its mission.

These specificities of the Matthean Community gave a unique colour to its struggle for Jewish identity with Formative Judaism and also enabled it to survive and develop into a wider and inclusive movement, even if eventually it lost out to Formative Judaism in being the inheritor of Israel's identity in an ethnic, sociological sense. In our opinion, if these factors are taken into account, they would qualify Overman's contentions but, even so, the achievement of this book in highlighting Matthew's setting is considerable and outstanding.

George KEERANKERI, S.J.

Book Notices

One God Worship (Monotheism). Its Evolution, Philosophy and Relevance in India By M.P CHRISTANAND Trivandrum Institute Voluntas Dei, 1993 Pp. xvi-136. Rs 60 (Available with Jude Thadeus Publications, No 132, Thambu Chetty Street, 1st Fl., Madras 600001)

The author taught for many years in the Department of Philosophy at St Stephen's College, Delhi, and in the Department of Religious Studies in the Punjabi University, Patiala. This is a second and revised edition of a book on Monotheism first published in 1979 In language easily accessible to the undergraduate student the author explains the meaning of religion, God and monotheism, both biblical and Greco-Roman. Three chapters are devoted to the Hindu tradition and the evolution of monotheism in it, stressing the importance of Varuna in the Rigveda, on whom the author had earlier published a monograph There is one chapter on Sikhism. Islam is mentioned only in passing references.

The information is abundant and useful. At times it is simplified, as when the Anglo-Saxon word *God* is said to be "ultimately derived from the Sanskrit *hu*, to invoke, or *hu*, to sacrifice" (p. 3). The Encyclopaedia Brittanica invoked here does not say exactly this, although one can probably affirm a connection, not a derivation, between the words.

T

men find their way through the maze of information about religion offered by many other sources.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Conflict in Corinth. By Walter J Hollenweger. Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1993, Pp.48. Rs 15.

This short book places Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians in an imaginary context of the Corinth of his time The author narrates incidents of community gatherings from the life of this socially mixed community within which different points taken up for consideration by Paul's letter are inserted The major figures mentioned by Paul (Chloe, Erastus, Tertius, Gaius, Titius Justus, Crispus) and the groups (slaves, dockworkers and women) are the actors. The narrator is an educated secretary-slave employed by the Great Corinthian Bank. The book does bring the letter to life, is suggestive and reminds us that Paul was writing to a real socially, religiously and economically conditioned community

Story of Jesus By Alan Rudge. Madras. CLS, 1993 Pp 16 Rs 15

This is a simple illustrated story of Jesus for young children to read or younger children to listen to A good little book, though it would be advisable to read the Gospels themselves to children or that they read them as soon as they can follow them in some way

God's Call By G Reginald. Madras. CLS, 1993. Pp vi-80. Rs 22

This is a guide for individuals or groups for Bible Study with the goal of deepening our grasp of our Christian vocation The author has much experience in guiding Bible Study groups. Four steps are suggested Read (the text), Recall (aspects of texts), Reflect (relate the text to life) and Respond (practical ways to live our call).

For Christ and the Church. By Titus Ebenezer. Madras, CLS, 1993. Pp. 99 Rs 36.

This book of sermons of the Tamil Presbyter of CSI, Titus Ebenezer (1907-1983), is published to mark his 85 birth anniversary He was a noted educationalist, an active and prominent member of the Christian Endeavour Movement and a pastor. These occasional sermons will profit the Christian lay persons and pastors. A thoughtful memorial to a dedicated pastor

Blessed Miguel Pro, S.J. Martyr of Christ the King By A. Dragon, S.J. Transl. by Sr Mary Agnes Chevalier, F M I Anand. Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1993 Pp 148 Rs 30 $ 4

Another addition to the series *Heroes For Today's Youth* this book was published in Spanish in 1959 Miguel Pro was beatified in 1988 The confrontation between State and Church in Mexico began in 1913 and only really ended recently Miguel Pro was shot in Mexico city by a firing squad with his brother and others on trumped up charges by orders of President Calles himself in 1927 after a few years of clandestine priestly ministry He had spent twelve years as an exile (1914-1926) in the USA, Nicaragua, Spain and Belgium and from 1922 had been very often in hospital for stomach operations.

Miguel Pro was a very humorous man, an accomplished actor and mimic — very useful to fool the police who often searched for him — and a man with a simple, deep interior life and a gifted pastor. He had known the lives of miners from his childhood and was able to win the confidence of bitter, hardened or indifferent persons The author tells the story of his life. The extracts from Pro's letters are inspiring and enable us to see the person Written in 1959 the book shares some of the attitudes to spirituality of that period which today may not have so much appeal. However the man and his life are deeply inspiring

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Vol. LVIII APRIL 1994 No. 4

VJTR 58(1994) 201-214

Mission Theology after Vatican II

Magisterial Teaching and Missiological Approaches in India

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Theologian Fr Neuner, well-known to our readers (St Vincent's Jesuit Residence, St Vincent Street, Pune 411 001), presented this paper at the National Consultation on Mission in Pune, January 1994 An account of the Consultation is offered elsewhere in this issue

The theme of this paper is so vast that obviously it cannot offer a complete exposition of two missiologies. It will point at the comparison of two lines of development and their mutual relation, which is the serious concern of this consultation Thus we attempt to outline 1 The frame of the post-conciliar development of mission theology; 2. The lines of magisterial teaching after the Council, 3 The approach on the Indian side, 4 Our search for an integrated Christology

1. The Frame of Post-Conciliar Mission Theology

Before Vatican II the very theme of this paper would have had no meaning There was no Indian theology — at least officially. The Latin language, the Western textbooks, the prevalence of European professors in Indian seminaries, the common order of studies and of priestly formation assured a high degree of conformity in theological teaching which seemed commonly accepted.

The Council took place at a time of radical changes in the world, a political and cultural transformation which deeply affected the life of the Church The colonial empires, Portuguese and Spanish, Dutch and French, and mostly the British Empire, had broken up or were on the point of dissolution The self-consciousness of nations asserted itself forcefully. For the Church Vatican II marks (in the global vision of K. Rahner) the dawn of the third stage of its history it had started as a Palestinian Church of Judeo-Christians; in the Council of Jerusalem it opened itself to the hellenistic world and gradually became the Church of Europe, growing beyond its borders but remaining mono-cultural, European, Vatican II marks the beginning of the world-Church of all nations, all languages and cultures Even in its composition, Vatican II was the first Council where the nations of the world were represented through their own sons — in Vatican I the bishops of Africa and Asia were still European. Vatican II was *the beginning* of the world-Church: its realization is the task and burden of the following generations.

The Council was conscious of the new situation and saw the importance of a decentralized formation programme for future priests. though basic issues of priestly training were laid down for all, it wanted that "owing to the wide diversity of peoples and countries, each nation on rite should have its own programme of priestly training, to be drawn up by the episcopal conference, which should be revised at regular intervals . adapted to the circumstances of time and place" (OT 1). The Mission Decree took up the invitation the general norms of the Council "must be combined with a desire to face up to the particular nation's own way of thinking and acting" (AG 16) The mind of the students "must be opened and refined so that they will better understand and appreciate the culture of their own people", they "should examine the relationship between the traditions and religion of their homeland and Christianity" (*ibid*)

The same Decree finally contains what may be called the Magna Carta for an indigenous theology in accordance to "the economy of the Incarnation," the growing churches "borrow from the customs, traditions, wisdom, teaching, arts and sciences of their people everything which could be used to praise the glory of the Creator, manifest the grace of the Saviour or contribute to the right ordering of Christian life" (AG 22). The interpretation of the Bible and the Church's teachings "must be

submitted to a new examination," not, to be sure, in a spirit of separation or particularism but "in the light of the tradition of the universal Church." This is the Council's vision of an indigenous theology developing in the spiritual and cultural climate of the nation, in communion with the universal Church. It will lead to "new particular churches, each with its own traditions," not to split the Church but "in the communion of the Church under the primacy of Peter which presides over the universal assembly of charity" (*ibid.*).

This is the broad frame in which Mission theology after the Council was expected to develop: a Church deeply conscious not only of her roots but also of 2000 years of tradition embodied in doctrinal formulae, ecclesial structures, liturgical rituals, all developed in a European setting, a Church becoming a world-Church, equally indebted to all cultures, all of them so deeply different in their views of world and life, each with its own spiritual experiences. This transition is not a process of one generation and tensions are bound to arise. Thirty years after the Council we can only try to trace the first steps of this development

2. The Magisterial Teaching on Mission after the Council

We consider only briefly some features of the Mission theology of Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) 1975, and of the Encyclical of Pope John Paul II *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) 1990. The mission theology of the Magisterium is firmly based on the Vatican Council Paul VI wrote EN ten years after the conclusion of Vatican II of which he says: "Its objectives are summed up in the single one: to make the Church of the twentieth century ever better fitted for proclaiming the Gospel to the people of the twentieth century" (EN 2)

In the spirit of the Council and with truly missionary zeal, he starts not with a doctrinal formula of our faith but with the proclamation of God's reign by Jesus himself, whose mission is entrusted to the Church. Thus the aim of evangelization as visualized by the Council is "bringing the Good News to all strata of humanity and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new" (EN 18). The content of this proclamation is the divine revelation in Jesus Christ: God's saving

love revealed in his Son (EN 26f) This message is related to the whole of human life in an "unceasing interplay of the Gospel and concrete human life, both personal and social," (EN 29) with a special emphasis on liberation from all crippling powers of our society· "The Church has the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings, many of whom are her own children, the duty of assisting the birth of this liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete. This is not foreign to evangelization" (EN 30) The Pope is, however, aware of the dangers in a radical opening to the secular and social sphere the mission of the Church could be reduced "to a man-centred goal , material well-being" (EN 32) As it was vital solemnly to recognize the world-open mission of the Church against a merely spiritual conception of evangelization, in line with Pope John XXIII, — the Council had struggled against any dichotomy of the spiritual and temporal order in the Church's mission — so we needed being warned against separating the struggle for a just society from the sharing of our faith in Jesus Christ

The Encyclical contains another warning Already after ten years, some teachings of the Council were misused as arguments against the Church's mission for instance, the high respect with which we must regard other religions, the possibility of salvation for adherents of these religions, the dignity and freedom of the human conscience which must never be violated (EN 80) This legitimate anxiety is the background for the reserved statement about other religions which seems to fall back on the Council's understanding of universal revelation (DV 3) and the all-comprising plan of God's saving providence (NA 1) According to EN, these religions are "most worthy of esteem," but they are called "natural religions", they are "gropingly reaching out" to the divine mystery, whereas "our religion effectively establishes with God an authentic and living relationship which the other religions do not succeed in doing though they have, as it were, their arms stretched out towards heaven" (EN 53) Here, we feel, the Encyclical does not come to the full realization of the Council regarding salvation the Council does not speak of religions — no religion has ever saved anyone — but of faith God reveals himself from the beginning to all people for their salvation People respond to God's self-communication in faith, within the frame of their conscience Only God saves, by reveal-

ing himself (DV 3); we are saved by responding in faith. A more explicit, officially accepted theology of religions was still missing; it is missing even today.

In RM of Pope John Paul II the anxiety about the decreasing missionary zeal is even more pronounced: "Missionary activity, especially directed 'ad gentes', appears to be wanting" and "difficulties both internal and external have weakened the Church's missionary thrust" (RM 2). In line with Paul VI (EN 80), various reasons are enumerated: fatigue, disenchantment, lack of joy and hope. But most serious of all is "widespread indifferentism, based on incorrect theological perspectives for which the support of the Council is claimed (RM 36).

The need of a powerful exposition of the mission mandate is answered in the first chapter, which presents Jesus Christ's central place in the Church's faith and mission. This is followed by the beautiful development of Jesus' proclamation of God's reign (ch. 2) and the unfolding of the working of the Holy Spirit (ch 3) in the Apostles and the whole Church The same Spirit is at work also beyond the Church "in the heart of every person," not only in individuals who are drawn by divine grace to salvation but also in communities, in various customs and cultures" (RM 28) This broad recognition of the working of the Holy Spirit in other religions (RM 29) seems the most inspiring text of the Encyclical It is followed by the wide survey of modern approaches, in the context of the "profound transformations which characterize today's world" (RM 37) and of the new "areopagi" or platforms where the Gospel must be preached today, most importantly the mass media (RM 37c)

All theological expositions are accompanied by warnings against deviation· the reign of God proclaimed by Jesus is embodied in his person and has its initial realization in the Church, it would be wrong to speak of the Kingdom apart from Jesus' person so that it might become "something completely human and secularized," concerned with programmes and struggles for liberation (RM 17); one cannot separate the working of the Holy Spirit outside the Church from the mission of Jesus or consider his "universal activity as separated from his particular activity in the body of Christ" (RM 29). It is the obvious task of the Magisterium to point out such deviations which distort a coherent understanding of God's plan of salvation.

It is a pity that this concern for the integrity of the Christian faith led to a change from the approach of the Council to the mystery of salvation *Redemptoris Missio* begins with the chapter on "Jesus Christ the only Saviour " Not faith in God but faith in Jesus Christ is the core of the Church's mission: "The Church's universal mission is born of the faith in Jesus Christ" (RM 4). It begins with the second article of the Creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ," not with the first, "I believe in God the Father." The Council unfolds God's salvific plan in a Trinitarian frame· it begins with the universal love and saving design of God the Father, which is realized in Jesus Christ and fulfilled through the Holy Spirit (LG 2-4, AG 2-4) Thus Jesus is not isolated from the universal invitation to salvation He is the manifestation in history of God's universal saving love What God willed from the beginning, the salvation of all people, became visible and embodied in our world through Jesus Christ This wide horizon is of deep significance in the present world of religious pluralism, both for the genuine understanding of our Christian identity in a pluralistic world and for the dialogal contact and collaboration with the religious and secular milieu in which we live and have to proclaim Christ

These brief references to EN and RM point to the specific role of the Magisterium in the Church as she is moving into a new era The approach of the Council to the secular sphere and to the rich but bewildering world of other cultures and religions has been recognized, encouraged and guided by the Magisterium It is its responsibility to safeguard the foundations of our faith and its healthy traditions In this task tensions, and also deviations, are unavoidable, but the frame and approach of the Council should always be maintained

3. The Theological Development in India

(a) The Background

The theological development in India must be seen in the wider context of the awakening of a renewed national consciousness resulting from the independence struggle The consciousness of self-identity of the Church in India gained momentum after the Council with the growing awareness of India's great cultural, spiritual and philosophical traditions which favourably compared with the achievements of the West, yet were very

different. Soon it was realized that the renewal of the Indian Church cannot simply consist in some modifications of western patterns. The Church must grow anew on Indian soil. Adaptation must become inculturation. Culture is not a garment that can be changed but a mode of living and thinking that affects every sphere of life.

This awakening to India's national inheritance was painfully connected with the awareness that this inheritance had often been despised by the western civilization with its technical superiority which had led the western nations to the domination of the rest of the world. Injustice had been done to the Indian economy which for millennia had been self-supporting but had now become part of a world-wide network that ruined and exploited it. Political dependence led to an economic dependence which lasts even today and becomes ever more subtle and all-pervasive It affects all spheres of national life. It is felt also in the Church. Imported Church structures and Western theology have hindered the development of a genuinely Indian spirituality and theology. Years of formation conditioned priests in India to a western outlook. The Church after independence was post-colonial, not yet truly Indian

The dominating role of the western Church, with its centralizing tendencies and control over material and theological developments, was strengthened by a sense of spiritual superiority The immense efforts and sacrifices of the western Church to propagate the faith in Jesus Christ in new continents remain an inspiration, but in many countries they are accompanied by political domination which led to the enslavement and exploitation of their peoples. After the ambiguous celebration of the fifth centenary of the discovery of the new world we could hardly accept today such a general statement as we find it in the Council, that "even in the secular history of humankind the Gospel has acted as a leaven in the interest of liberty and progress, and it always offers itself as a leaven with regard to fellowship, unity and peace" (AG 8). Further the negative and often deeply disrespectful language of Christians about the ancient religions of India is resented, as when they are simply summed up as polytheism, idol worship and superstition.

Such negative historical memories cannot be simply brushed aside: they have influenced the present reality of the Church in the continents of America, Africa and Asia and are alive in the

conscience of the present generation. However, it would be totally wrong to see the root of Asian theology primarily in a reaction against the West Much more important and fruitful in the development of the Church is the emerging consciousness of the national endowment of India which made it the cradle of the great world religions of Hinduism and Buddhism. It is idle to imagine how Christian life would have taken shape if it had first been developed in the East, in India, instead of the West. But surely, while the genius of the western nations, Greek, Roman, Germanic, is enshrined in Christian tradition, the genius of the East has been left out, and has actually been eliminated by the monolithic western patterns of doctrinal presentation and community life God has bestowed his gifts on all nations; from the beginning he has revealed himself to the entire human family, without discrimination, for their salvation (cf DV 2 and 3). The revelation in Jesus Christ has not invalidated or replaced the original revelation, which has been enshrined in India's religious traditions

Indian theologians have become conscious of the peculiarity of the Indian experience of the divine, different from that of the West. the all-pervading presence of God in the whole of creation In the Statement of the Research Seminar on Non-Biblical Scriptures (Bangalore 1975) we read "Should such basic differences of approach which manifest themselves in diverse ways of experiencing God be suppressed or subordinated to one fixed set of categories? God is all-embracing Within divergence and contraries we see an underlying unity — God, who in his providence kept religious diversities alive" (n 36) In the same line, the final Statement of the Research Seminar on "Sharing Worship" (Bangalore 1988) says "God is at work in all religions and traditions They are the authentic expression of God-experience of men and women throughout the centuries The saving experience of one living God in all believers and our awareness of this presence in them is the foundation and starting point of sharing worship since all symbols and rituals are related to the ONE sacrament of humanity, Jesus Christ" (n 16).

From such texts it becomes clear that the opening of the Council to the totality of human life and the whole human history has not remained an academic invitation for Indian theologians It has touched the deepest aspirations of the Indian mind, the desire to be truly Christian not by turning away from the treasures of the Indian past but by "learning of the riches God

has distributed among the nations" (AG 11).

(b) Facing Poverty and Exploitation

As sons of the nation, Indian theologians studied the Indian realities. Most conspicuous of these is the problem of the massive poverty of millions, a poverty which is not the result of lack of resources, but is to a great extent caused by injustice and by the alienation of the people from their own social and economic traditions. The complexity of the problem was unfolded in the Research Seminar on "The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society" (Bangalore 1981). Its aim was not limited to a socio-economic analysis but, according to the Conclusions of the Seminar, "to clarify how the Church's mission and the struggle for justice and liberation are related to the full and final coming of God's reign and how the Church could contribute to it by joining the struggle to create a new society" (n. 1) The target group of the Seminar included all leading personalities of the Church in India The Church's mission is spelled out: "The Church is not merely a narrator of salvation history but she spells out salvation in history, and that in the context of today The Church is to continue the mission of Jesus in whom the Kingdom of God broke through into the world . It consists in the ordering human society according to God's rule To this the Church must witness, of this she must be a sign and instrument" (n. 72).

Thus the Church's contribution to the Indian world is seen, in line with Vatican II, to be the responsibility for the totality of human life. India's theologians have translated this in respect to the actual problems of the nation in its struggle against evils that block her way into the future They feel in solidarity with the worldwide struggle for the renewal of social and economic conditions, for the true liberation which Paul VI declared as belonging to evangelization (EN 30).

(c) The Attitude to Other Religions

Indian theologians also follow the Council in the second sphere which characterizes the Indian scene· the Christian message is offered in a world of religious pluralism. Vatican II has set a definite seal on the radical change of outlook on the human family. Augustine spoke of it as *massa damnata*, a sinful world which drifts towards eternal death unless it is rescued in the ark of the elect, the Church. In this world conception, the

Christian identity consists in separation, in belonging to the chosen people, avoiding contact with and contamination from the world, except for reaching out to save its people and draw them into the ark of salvation.

The vision of the Council is different. The entire human family "shares in a common destiny" and is included "in God's saving design which extends to all people" (NA 1). Under God's all-comprising providence we are struggling in common for a better world. Christian identity is seen in solidarity with the common pilgrimage to a common goal "when the elect are gathered together in the holy city which is illumined by the glory of God in whose splendour all people will walk" (NA 1). This common providence and destiny has no boundaries of races, cultures or religions.

The recognition of this solidarity of the entire human family has changed the relation of Christians to people of other faiths from seclusion to dialogue on every level of communication. Indian theologians have responded to this opening of the Council in an urge to shoulder the responsibility for the world and society to which we belong, and most of all in the desire for a spiritual closeness to all people With regard to sharing religious rituals we used to distinguish between the social aspect of a celebration, e g, in marriages or feast day customs, which were considered religiously neutral and therefore open to Catholics, and the religious sphere which was closed to us Today we desire to be united most of all in the spiritual sphere, in prayer and worship The Statement on "Shared Worship" (Bangalore 1988) warns every Christian not, through any action, "to jeopardize or compromise his Christian identity," but through a spiritual association with all to "recognize the working of the one Spirit of healing, harvest and fertility of the land" (n. 32). This is fully in line with the example Pope John Paul II himself gave in the communion of prayer in Assisi "Excluding any mistaken interpretation, the inter-religious meeting held in Assisi was meant to confirm my conviction that every authentic prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in every human heart" (RM 29)

The dangers of this attitude are obvious. Even in the Council, the introduction of *Nostra Aetate* provoked critical comments from many bishops who felt that in relation to other religions we must be conscious of the differences, and not only of what

binds us together. This is particularly important in the anti-intellectual climate that often prevails in the young generation, the many superstitious fears by which many of our uneducated Christians are haunted, and the practices to which they cling, handed down from old generations. Still, in spite of all these dangers, the desire for a true spiritual communion with people of all faiths prevails. The Bangalore Statement concludes: "The Spirit of the Lord, at work in all religions, beckons us and all people to worship together. Sharing in worship springs from the depth of love, God's own love alive in the depth of every person's heart" (n. 50)

(d) A Renewal Ecclesiology

The central theme of Vatican II was the renewed vision of the Church as a community of believers, not primarily as an institution such had been often presented in pre-conciliar theology and actually appeared in society and history Jesus' mission is entrusted to the whole Christian community. The guiding and teaching role of the hierarchy is a vital service to the community so that it "can work in freedom and order for the common goal and arrive at salvation" (LG 18). But the goal and the mission are common to all the believers.

The far-reaching implications of this ecclesiology has affected also the Indian Church. For various reasons the dominant position of the hierarchy and the clerical monopoly in the local communities were more pronounced in India than in other parts of the Church The need of a better formation of the laity in doctrine and spirituality and of their involvement in the mission of the Church was urgently felt. The Council theology had to be applied in India in a concrete manner. This task was taken up in the Research Seminar on "Ministries in the Council" connected with a broad-based pastoral consultation (Bangalore 1976).

Considering the praxis of the early Church which in its organization "showed great adaptability and variety while preserving the essential structure of ministry, leadership and authority," the possibility of developing more differentiated ministries in the Indian Church was examined. Their introduction would not be something simply new but "the installation of lay people into them signifies the official recognition given by the community through its leader of services already rendered by those people." Through this installation, lay people do not be-

come clerics, nor should they be considered mere "auxiliaries of the priests," but "their services must be integrated in the mission of the whole Church" (*Conclusion*, n 50).

The urgency of vitalizing the entire Christian community through lay ministries has been stressed even more forcefully by the Federation of Asian Bishops in their statement on "Ministries in the Church " In response to the Invitation of the Holy See to introduce new ministries (*Motu Proprio* "Ministeria quaedam," 1972), the Federation embarked on a "common endeavour to make the ministries of the churches more relevant in our times and better suited to meet the needs of our people" (n. 4). The need is pressing "If Asian Christianity is not the leaven in the dough of the new Asia that is taking shape, it runs the risk of being wiped out in the dramatic events which might take place in the next few decades" (n 13) Renewal means an active involvement of all "We are in a process of rediscovering that the individual Christian can best survive, grow and develop as a Christian person in the midst of a self-nourishing, self-governing, self-ministering and self-propagating Christian community" (n 49)

For the Indian scene, the Bangalore Seminar envisaged in the urban situation leaders with "professional skill" for the "increasing number of homogeneous groups, professional and otherwise (youth, university students, etc), cutting across the boundaries of existing parishes" (60) In rural areas, where from one centre a great number of villages must be served, "some form of ministry [must] be exercised in their midst on a residential basis" (62) A local leader could go through the stages of lay ministries, with appropriate training, and be raised to the diaconate and eventually to the priesthood (63) It is obvious that such ministries must be planned carefully But what is important is the courage and openness to conceive of new models in view of the better service to the Christian communities in changing situations

What has happened to the awakening of the Indian community? We are now happy with the local basic communities which are emerging in various places, so that the ecclesiological frame in terms of ministries has been put aside both in Rome and in India Are we too fond of our traditional structures of authority?

4. Towards an Integrated Christology

We see that the creative initiatives of Indian theology developed within the frame and orientation of Vatican II. The task is far from completed but the initiatives remain within a coherent vision. However the most important and difficult challenge still lies ahead: the development of a comprehensive Christology.

In this sphere, too, constructive approaches have been made. The rethinking of the Church's mission today would have been impossible without a renewed understanding of Jesus' own mission and message which are entrusted to the Church. The shift from a descending Christology — God's revelation and salvation coming to us through Jesus Christ — to the complementary approach of an ascending Christology — the study of Jesus' earthly life and work — was needed It is based on the critical biblical studies which were recognized as legitimate in the Council Paul VI's mission theology actually showed the way. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* begins with Jesus the Evangelizer (n 7) and his proclamation of God's reign (n 8), leading to the evangelizing Church (n 13ff) The image of Jesus' prophetic personality and his mission to proclaim the Good News to the poor (Lk 4·18) has taken the central stage in the Indian presentation of Jesus Christ. The relevance of Jesus' message for a suppressed and poverty-ridden society has been deeply realized by the new generation of theologians

But the question remains whether this approach is sufficiently comprehensive to express the fullness of the mystery of Christ, and whether it will represent to the Indian mind the depth of the divine mystery which pervaded religious India from the earliest times. We ought to admit that the ancient dogmatic Christological definitions, expressed in categories of Greek philosophy and anthropology, are unrelated to the frames of Indian thinking In the words of A. Pieris, "the Chalcedonial formula sounds meaningless when translated (if translation is possible) into many Asian languages" (*Vidyajyoti Journal* 1993, p. 595). The anthropological framework is simply different.

The same author proposes a formula for Jesus' uniqueness which is based on his prophetic message, embodied in his life and death: "Jesus is the contradiction between Mammon and Yahweh, and Jesus is the defence-pact between the oppressed and Yahweh" (*ibid.*) We would agree to this approach provided

it is read not in exclusively social perspectives.

Jesus is a *contradiction*: his entire life is conflict, "destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be spoken against" (Lk 2·34). He is conflict not in the ordinary struggles that accompany and disturb all human history but in the radical contrast between human autonomy that relies on its own power to build the earthly city, to rule and dominate, and the surrender to the ultimate love that comprises all creation, shelters our human life and invites us to share in God's reign Jesus embodies the conflict between Yahweh and Mammon

Jesus is a *defence-pact*, Yahweh's covenant with his people, leading them to freedom and bliss. The struggle is hard· Jesus has neither shield nor sword to contest the arsenal of weapons arrayed against him He is defeated and ridiculed. But from the tomb of his earthly life and the ruin of his work he rises and lives· God raised him So he is the defence-pact with the defeated, the poor, the hungry and weeping who have no chance in life. He is with them as the guarantee of final victory and freedom.

He is resurrection and life not only a prophet who accuses the oppressors and consoles the downtrodden, not only does he proclaim God's power and final victory, but he *is* the beginning of the new, the true world. He comes from God, he is given to us as salvation and eternal life, if only we receive him and believe in him

On such lines a comprehensive Christology could develop, closer to the biblical language, detached from philosophical abstractions, conveying the ultimate mystery of human existence before the unknown, the mystery for which Jesus has only the simple word 'Abba', my Father From the core of an integrated Christology a genuine missiology could develop.

VJTR (1994) 215-225

Mission for Transformation

J. MATTAM, S.J.

"Mission is for transformation," concluded a National Consultation on Mission organized by the CBCI Commission for Proclamation and Communication. This consultation was held at Ishvani Kendra, Pune, from 4-8 January, 1994. Some 104 persons including lay women, men, religious, priests and sixteen bishops participated. It was organized on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the CBCI, 25 years after the All India Seminar on the Church in India (Bangalore 1969) and 21 years after the Patna Consultation on Evangelization.

In the letter inviting participants to this Consultation, Bishop George Anathil, the Chairman of the Commission on Proclamation, had written· "Twenty-five years of new thinking and new approaches to Evangelization have taken the Church into new directions, some expected and others unexpected " So he invited people to reflect on "what is happening to Proclamation /Evangelization in India, what are the main theological/missiological trends, new methods, etc " To help these reflections, a survey was conducted in thirty-two sample dioceses covering the twelve ecclesiastical regions of the country The Consultation was the conclusion of the survey.

The survey showed that during the 1971-1991 period there was a decline in conversions and baptisms (except in the North East), and a large number of Christians from the oppressed groups had left the Church. It was feared that the emphasis on dialogue, works of liberation and certain theological trends may have lessened the zeal of missionaries. The Vatican II's insights into salvation also outside the Church may also have contributed to this slackening. The imbalance in Church personnel and services between the South and the North was also noted. The survey also pointed out certain tensions: the bishops and a small

percentage of priests and religious look at baptism as the goal of evangelization, whereas the majority, some 80% of priests and religious, do not consider this a priority but making Christ known and the proclamation of his values. Tension is also noted between the catechists and priests, between religious and bishops and priests; between groups and rites; between local people and the missionaries from other states. There is much *talk* of dialogue, liberation, etc., but in fact nothing very significant is happening; liberation work shows a decline. On the other hand, there is a new emphasis on proclaiming Jesus and his gospel, with less emphasis on Church institution and doctrines The survey pointed out new ways of evangelization as practiced by various Christian groups, especially lay groups There is a growth in institutions like hospitals, dispensaries, schools, and more efforts have been made in faith formation There are signs of growing lay participation in Christian life and mission. While priests are less close to people, women religious seem to be closer to them and are in the forefront of liberation work More diocesan priests are involved in liberation work, in contrast to earlier times when generally only men and women religious were involved

It is on this background that the Consultation started with an inaugural address by Bishop Valerian of Poona The Bishop quoted John Paul II to affirm the highest priority to be given to evangelization and stressed the following: (1) the Church needs to be evangelized before she can be an evangelizer; (2) the nature of the whole Church as evangelizer, (3) proclamation as sharing one's experience of Jesus Christ; (4) the role of the Holy Spirit in evangelization; and, finally, (5) the importance of the healing ministry today. He bemoaned that Christians do not 'know Christ', as the first disciples like Andrew, Paul and the Samaritan woman 'knew him' and became evangelizers, bringing others to Christ He invited the participants to explicitate (a) the relation between the uniqueness of Christ and salvation through other religions, (b) developmental work, dialogue and proclamation, (c) the Kingdom without a 'King', (d) the lay peoples' role and (e) inculturation of the message.

The sharing by Sr Mariamma FMM from Attapady, Kerala, was much appreciated She spoke of her being with the tribals of that area, and how that involvement radically transformed her life, "re-christianized and humanized me."

Dr Arun Shourie began his talk with the story of his own search for meaning and God in the context of unmerited suffering of his young child. He pointed out how the missionary presence and action hastened the reform movements in Hinduism led by Gokhale, Gandhi, Aurobindo and others. He spoke with appreciation of the educational and medical services rendered by the Church. Following Gandhiji's way of assessing Christian missionaries and mission, he said that what vitiates our otherwise good work was our obsession with conversion to Christianity and salvation through the Church. He praised the way of Mother Teresa who serves without a preoccupation with "saving souls through the Church" which would make it not a service for itself Service for its own sake without an ulterior motive is today's need, he stressed. He referred to another angle, which he called "nominalism": "Does a great number of converts reveal a real change in life, in ethical conduct, etc.?"

Moreover, the past attitude of Christianity denouncing as idolatry all the worship of the Hindus was a disservice. He held that though Christianity denounced the caste and idol worship in Hinduism, Christians themselves practiced both. The inclusive Hindu attitude was in sharp contrast to the exclusive attitude of the Christians He criticized even today's attitude of 'finding some truth in other religions' as imperialism, as what is accepted as truth is only what conforms to truth in Christianity. Christians, he said, did not differ from Muslims in persuading others to accept their religion. If one does not leave others to follow their inner directive force, Jihad is the obvious consequence The mosque demolition, he said, was the first islamic act of the Hindus. Hindu fundamentalism is a response to the Jihad attitude of other religions He concluded with a few suggestions to Christians: (1) supplement and complement the faith of the people — do not try to replace it; (2) live the life of Jesus, or of piety — it will persuade others, (3) do not seek to persuade and convert those who are not in a position to assess and oppose you; (4) self-monitoring — look into the depths and see what the changed atmosphere is inviting you to; (5) make an honest account of what Christians wrote about Hinduism in the past centuries; (6) all the movements of dalits and tribals should follow the means of Jesus and Gandhi: non-violence. He also warned Christians of the danger of being 'used' in areas of instability by anti-national force for their own political gains.

In his paper, "Mission Theology after Vatican II, "Fr Neuner presented a historical background to the development of the theme of mission after the Council and the significant changes that have occurred in the understanding of mission, and concluded with an assessment of the new Christology as the source of a new missiology He showed that the mission theology of the Magisterium is firmly based on the Vatican Council. *Evangelii nuntiandi* gives a new orientation to the understanding of mission. It is understood as "bringing the Good News to all strata of humanity and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new"(EN 18) While this encyclical has some very positive contribution towards the understanding of the mission especially in the context of other religions, Neuner concluded· "Here, we feel, the Encyclical does not come to the realization of the Council, because a more explicit, officially accepted theology of religions is still missing today " In the context of the decreasing missionary zeal, the Encyclical *Redemptoris missio* (RM) decried the widespread indifferentism. Neuner pointed out some of the drawbacks of the RM For example, it begins with the second article of the creed, instead of the first, namely, God and his reign After a brief exposition of the two encyclicals, Neuner looked into the situation of Indian theologians "Indian theologians have become conscious of the peculiarity of the Indian experience of the divine, different from that of the West· of the all-pervading presence of God in the whole of creation " Another dimension of the theological development in India is that it situates our mission in the context of the massive poverty of millions and the pluralism of religions This invites us to create a new ecclesiology of fellowship and co-responsibility, rather than emphasizing the hierarchy or clerical domination Therefore he stressed the urgency of vitalizing the entire Christian community through lay ministries. Neuner concluded with a reflection on the new Christology A shift from a descending Christology to an ascending Christology, stressing Jesus' earthly life and work, is not enough The image of Jesus' prophetic personality and his mission to proclaim the good news to the poor has to come to the forefront "Jesus is the contradiction between Mammon and Yahweh, and Jesus is the defence-pact between the oppressed and Yahweh "[1] Jesus is also the resurrection and the life, he is the beginning of the new, the true

1 A Pierris in *VJTR*, 1993, pp 595f

world. He comes from God, he is given to us as salvation and eternal life, if only we receive him and believe in him. Such lines of a new Christology, Neuner believes, would be the beginning of a new missiology.

George Soares-Prabhu, in his talk on the proclamation of Jesus and the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, offered an understanding of the mission (for there are many different understandings). The context of the mission is creation, which expresses God's Word. In the Bible it is expressed through 'in the beginning', leading to 'the new heavens and the new earth', through a repeated process of creating order out of disorder and chaos. The Bible as confessional history gives the ultimate meaning of creation and life. Creation is seen as bringing order into chaos. And the Bible story is a series of acts bringing order into disorder. Chaos — creation — disorder (sin, alienation, sin spreads, ending in exile and slavery — order (freedom and formation of a contrast community) — chaos (monarchy leading into slavery, reversal of exodus, bonded labour, end of God's experiment) — prophets (protest) — exile (disorder — end of Israel) — order (restoration, salvation in the person of Jesus Christ) — God finally overcomes sin and re-establishes order, his rule The rule of God is the action of God to strike down the wrong doer, to save and to defend the weak. In God's plan liberation-salvation is from sin and death. It has cosmic (from chaos), social (exodus), and spiritual dimensions (from sin — NT). Different aspects are emphasized at different times. With this Kingdom of God, a new process has begun which will culminate in the new earth and new heavens, leading to humankind becoming a family of God.

The mission is at the service of this process of growth of life, of creation and of liberation. It has an eschatological dimension, namely the transformation of human history and of the cosmos. What leads to this transformation is the experience of God as love, an experience which Jesus has shared with us. Liberation and transformation do not come through any form of power, as various groups in Israel had expected it to come. Liberation is made tangible in a liberated community, a contrast community, one not based on greed and competition, but on love. The Church is a community, a 'contrast community', structured by love alone, and makes God's love present, as its sacrament. It is a community at the service of the Kingdom. The

experience of the risen Lord is that which leads to the mission. Otherwise the mission would be conquest or a sale. Evangelization is bringing the Good News that God loves us and we are not a condemned race, and making his love present in the most effective and loving way When we make God's love present through our loving, Christ as the embodiment and source of love is present and active 1 Jn 4:7 says, "anyone who loves knows God" — and hence makes him present. In that sense Mother Teresa proclaims Jesus eloquently

If we share our experience, our encounter with the risen Lord, we cannot be charged of "proselytization " A missiology has to follow from our experience, our spirituality. Our mission brings to awareness the universal love which is God; it points to God's love everywhere. When speaking within the community, the language of 'contrast community' is acceptable, but when speaking to others, we have to use another language

Dr Ram Dayal Munda, ex-Vice-Chancellor of Ranchi University saw Jesus as the most enlightened person. The Tribals, he said, are grateful to the mission of the Christians, for all progress that has come among the Tribals is largely thanks to the Christian movement. However he lamented that Christianity had divided the tribal people, in a sense it sided with the exploiter and monied class and rulers; Christian schools created exploiters After awakening, the people should have been left to themselves — but this did not happen The Church should stand by the Tribals in their desperate struggle for survival. They are threatened with extinction.

Certain Highlights of the Consultation[2]

The Source of the Mission

The personal and community experience of Jesus (cf 1 Jn 1.1) has to be the origin of mission, not the fear that others will not be saved Some found inspiration in the description of a totally new people and society that Jesus envisaged and in the newness that he brought in terms of outlook, relationship and type of community The compassion of Jesus, lived out in today's unjust world, invites us to proclaim the good news of God's love, that is, the new type of people we could all be, and to

2. The quotations are from the draft of the Final Statement used in the assembly; I do not have the definitive text of the final statement

make explicit the Kingdom that is already in the lives of the people. God's creative love operative from the beginning is the source of our mission. That same love found embodiment in Jesus of Nazareth, and as the Holy Spirit remains our guiding force. Our mission is essentially the joyful discovery of the transforming, life-giving and creative presence of the Spirit in the world. The whole assembly came to an unanimous conclusion about the need of a re-vitalization of our spiritual life, our rootedness in Christ and his Spirit, and the transformation of our life through the Gospel values.

The Goal of the Mission

The goal of the mission is the transformation of persons and society and of the patterns of relationship. It is conversion — a true change of heart and of structures. It aims at creating communities of love, justice, freedom, fellowship and peace which Jesus called the Kingdom of God. It is not primarily to increase numbers, or to save souls. The goal is to share our experience of Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, the transformation that God's love has brought in our lives; it is to awaken in others the awareness of the presence and action of the Spirit of God in their lives. This comprehensive orientation is perhaps one of the most important contributions of the Consultation.

Paths of Mission

As to the paths of mission, a primary emphasis was placed on life witness. The Christian mission consists essentially in witnessing to our experience of God in Christ, and in living out the values of the Gospel, e.g., love, justice, integrity, honesty, service, compassion. This point received a very great emphasis and opposed mere verbal proclamation and propaganda ('sale'). This witness has to be through individuals, small Christian communities and also through our institutions. Smaller village-based institutions have better chance of fulfilling these criteria. The general impression created by large prestigious institutions is that though they do serve some useful purposes they tend to become centres of power and money, following the pattern of similar institutions throughout the country, and are likely to be counter-witnesses. The useful service rendered by these institutions was not denied, but emphasis was placed on the negative image many of them project to the people. So it was suggested

that Christian institutions be evaluated from time to time to see how far they are truly bearing witness to God's love for all. They ought to be centres of justice, honesty and outreach to the needy....

As to the other dimensions such as proclamation, dialogue and inculturation, nothing very new was added to the existing literature on these themes All the same, there was an overall emphasis on making the Kingdom values present, on transforming society and the patterns of relationship and forming communities of love, justice and sharing. I must add that the question of how this can be done by an insignificant and, in some places, despised minority like the Christian, was not really looked into. In this context I may mention what was said about conversion to Christianity The Consultation took note of the accusation often levelled against Christians of fostering proselytization using questionable means such as force and allurements. The assembly asserted that whenever this happened, it was regrettable and reprehensible The Church categorically denounces and rejects all such practices and methods, holding sacred the freedom of the individual

> In spreading religious faith and introducing religious practices, everyone ought at all times to refrain from any manner of action which could seem to carry a hint of coercion or of a kind of persuasion that would be dishonourable and unworthy, especially when dealing with poor and uneducated people Such a manner of action would have to be considered an abuse of one's right and a violation of the rights of others [3]

As the Church understands it in its deepest sense, the group affirmed that conversion is primarily to God and to one's fellow men/women However, the Church equally defends the sacred right of individuals to profess the religion of their choice.

The Local Church as the Agent of Mission

The whole Church community, and locally the local Church, as the subject and agent of mission was another emphasis that found expression throughout the consultation. The role and place of lay persons, especially of women and the youth, came in for great attention. In the local Church community, the central place of the family was reaffirmed as the primary agent of proclamation and witness.

3. Vatican II. *Declaration on Religious Freedom*, 4

> Without the promotion of creative lay ministries in the mission of the Church, the entire Church will not realize itself as a subject of mission. This is best achieved in the formation of Basic Christian Communities. Only when we have small Christian communities conscious of their gifts endowed by the Spirit, and capable of effectively and creatively participating in the mission of the Church, will the entire Church become the subject of mission.

About lay participation, the Final Statement said:

> The specific vocation of the laity is to share the good news by living the Gospel in the family, work places and public life, where opportunity offers itself. Their leavening presence and action are more especially called for today in situations of conflict, dishonesty and corruption, and tensions between members of different religious groups Within the Church, the laity should have an effective participation in the decision making, in the planning and carrying out of pastoral programmes

The need of revitalizing parish councils was stressed. In order that they be prepared to fulfil their proper mission in the Church, it was urged that faith formation be given to the laity. It was suggested that the resources of the Church for formation should be reasonably distributed for the formation of the laity and seminarians

Steps need to be taken to train small groups in active leadership, missiological vision and a deeper prayer life so as to ensure a serious faith commitment and effective involvement in the mission of Jesus The different charisms of the laity should be recognized and an opportunity be given for their expression in the Church community Greater emphasis was placed on the role of women and youth, their training and their involvement in the mission of Jesus today It was recorded that Lay Institutes and Lay Associations also have their important role to play. Finally the focus was on priests and religious Their life-style and formation (initial and on-going) drew the attention of all The priest's role as animator and inspirer of the community was stressed. The bishop was seen as the leader of the whole community, empowering all to exercise their charisms in the Church, at the service of the mission.

Flowing from the emphasis on the mission of the whole Church community, the empowerment of the laity, especially of women and the youth, and a participatory Church leadership and decision-making, structural changes within the Church were strongly recommended.

A more effective participation in decision-making can be fostered, for example, if before a serious matter is discussed by the CBCI, consultations are held at the local parish level. The CCI and similar consultative bodies can be made more functional; the parish councils should become decision-making, not merely consultative bodies; the priests and bishops could be accountable to the people, and the lay ministries made more relevant and responsible for the building up of the community. It was also suggested that the honorific titles like Reverend, Lord, Eminence, Grace, etc., which are remnants of a feudal and Roman empire system, be discarded, so that all call one another brothers/sisters as they really are

Mission among the Tribals and Dalits

Though there are tribal Christian communities in Gujarat, Maharashtra, M.P. and parts of Rajasthan and elsewhere, special reference was made to the Church in Chotanagpur, which has become a vibrant self-sufficient Church, consisting of nearly 9% of the total Catholic population of India It has Adivasi Bishops, a large number of priests and religious and many people go out for missionary activity. This Church bears witness to the transforming power of the Gospel, both in the life of the people and in social structures In the growing tribal Church of the North East the dynamic leadership of the laity is evident. The tribals still face exploitation and in some areas the fear of extinction — in this context the Church needs to play an important role in defending this weak community "Through education, social assistance, conscientization, the promotion of culture, the preservation of their language and a variety of other services, the Church can build up the tribal communities " The Church needs to net-work with others who are concerned about the preservation and growth of this community There are signs of hope in the openness of the community to progress and to new ventures.

The Christians from dalit groups form a very considerable percentage of India's Christian population. There is a wider dalit awakening which is present also in various churches. The sad persistence of caste in the Church was strongly condemned and a call was made to support liberation movements among the dalits, the crushed people of India. The work among them should be geared to empowering them to self-determination and independence

Conclusion

After writing the above, I looked at a report I had written about the National Consultation on Evangelization held in Patna from 3-8 Oct 1973.[4] Most of the matter covered there bears great similarity to what was said at Pune. In Patna there was a great emphasis on contemplation; this did not come up in Pune. Otherwise, most of what was said in Pune about the role and formation of the laity, especially women and youth, the witness through life, etc., were also said in Patna and good resolutions in all areas were taken, perhaps more forcefully. Hence perhaps the scepticism that was felt then was justified. Referring to missionaries, I had written "There was also scepticism as to the value of the recommendations since many felt that nothing would be done about them in most places" (p 448) Let us hope that the resolutions taken in Pune will bear better results

When raising questions for the workshops, little inspiration was drawn from the key-note address and other talks; not even from the findings of the survey, though in the final draft some of these figured. One of the major drawbacks of the Consultation was that there were very few lay persons and people actually engaged in mission work, though many had been invited. As in the Patna Consultation, in conclusion, the participants affirmed

> At the threshold of the third millennium we are convinced that this moment (*kairos*) is filled with the promise of new vitality for our mission Our responsiveness to the Spirit and to our people will mean that we recognize the newness and urgency of our mission We re-commit ourselves to the mission of Christ in India. We are inspired to say with Paul, "woe to us if we do not proclaim the Good News of God's love in Jesus for all our people in this land "

The participants came out of the Consultation with the conviction that they draw strength and inspiration from the Eucharist to carry on the work of Jesus in our land

4 "Evangelizaton, a Report on the National Consultation," in *Clergy Monthly* (now *VJTR*), 37 (1973), pp 436-448

VJTR 58(1994) 226-228

The Meaning of Christ

M.P. Krishna KUTTY

In February 1993 our Journal published "A Hindu's Reflection on Christ" by Dr Kalpesh Gajiwala This month we are happy to reprint two pieces by a well-known journalist from Kerala which appeared at Christmas time in the Delhi edition of *The Times of India* (25 and 27 December 1993), with the headings 'The Meaning of Christmas' and 'A Celebration of Christmas', under the rubric 'First Person'

I

Napoleon Bonaparte, standing in the approaching shadows of death in his St Helena isle of exile, said to his military aide, General Bertrand "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I founded empires But on what did the creations of our genius rest? On force Jesus Christ alone founded His empire on love and at this hour millions would die for him " Since then, as earlier, both the ignorant and the wise, the great and the small, have never ceased to marvel at the influence of this unschooled son of a carpenter on human lives

It is Christmas and the world goes mad with celebrations Newspapers, shopping arcades and luxury apartments are splashed with colour and excitement In many such celebrations Christ is the missing factor There is much merrymaking but little effort to focus attention on essentials At the heart of Christianity is a tremendous, dynamic and transforming power, which is the secret of its successes on the various shores the globe

Christ did not found any religion and the Bible makes it plain that He came for the whole human race Christ can sweep into a person's life and change it utterly

He still represents the highest ideal that human thought is capable of achieving

An auctioneer having an old and battered violin did not count it worthwhile to waste much time on it As it was about to be sold for three dollars, a grey-haired man came forward,

dusted the instrument, tightened the strings and played a pure and sweet melody. There was thundering applause. The violin was again on auction. The auctioneer made $ 3 000 What made the difference? Myra Brooks Welen replies:

"And many a man with life out of tune.
And battered and torn with sin
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd."

Much like the old violin. What made the difference? The Master's touch

II

In one of his recent interviews, the doyen of Indian industry J R D. Tata told Doordarshan that he found happiness in being useful, in being creative. Writing in the August 1993 issue of the *Span*, a former ambassador, J N. Dhamija, recalled that the great and glorious hours of his life had been those "when I gave a helping hand to others without expecting anything in return, and not when I struggled and succeeded to gain my own ends And I can well imagine and appreciate that in this world those alone live who live for others "

These two are just articulating a truth which any thinking person must discover in his or her saner moments Men and women in the past had discovered that joy is not to be found in self-gratification but in the service of others This finding has a corollary, that no man is self-sufficient — even the mighty and wealthy need others

The same truth is exemplified in Christ's greatest commandment to love God "with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and his second commandment "love your neighbour as much as you love yourself."

Christmas is a celebration of this principle Jesus took human form and came into the world to accomplish his redemptive work on the cross He died that we might live and "have life more abundantly " His way to the abundant life is summed up in John 12.24· "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed But if it dies, it produces many seeds The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life "

Looking to the history of the human race, it would seem that the principle of the cross is written into the constitution of

this world. Love involves sacrifice and abundant living has to do with loving the neighbour

Surely, a major part of the joy of living is derived out of relationships And, as surely, broken relationships and conflicts account for a major share of human misery In homes, villages, towns and nations, the scenario is one of broken relationships: society is afflicted from head to foot

The purpose of life, from the point of view of a man of faith, is to learn to know, use and enjoy life, the very centre of which is made up of personal relations Yes, central to life are people, not things ("Life," declares the Bible again and again, "does not consist in the abundance of things a man possesses ")

Creative living is a matter of human relations For relationships to become creative, certain conditions have to be fulfilled "This is my commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you " This love for one another involves concern We ought to be concerned about our neighbours We ought to be interested in people Growing indifference and apathy to the neighbour is a mark of the city culture and the result is loneliness In the midst of vast crowds, people feel lonely, starved of love, so essential for the healthy growth of the human personality

The man of faith takes time for friendship, he lives when he loves, when he is involved in the lives of others, when he builds, creates, hopes and suffers along with others in society In seclusion a life loses its meaning, but as one life touches another, blessings are multiplied

The world's idea of greatness is the man who has the most people looking up to him and serving him But the Biblical picture of greatness is the man who can and does serve the most. Christ said "But he that is greatest among you shall be the servant of all " One such servant was St Francis of Assisi, who prayed

Lord, make me an instrument of the peace,
where there is hatred, let me sow love,
where there is injury, pardon,
where there is doubt, faith,
where there is despair, hope
where there is darkness, light,
where there is sadness, joy

(*By arrangement with* THE TIMES OF INDIA)

VJTR 58 (1994) 229-248

Bishop-Religious Relationship according to CIC and CCEO

Dr Antony PINHEIRO, O.C.D.

Dr Pinheiro concludes here his exercise, began in the February issue, of scanning the two codes of Canon Law and other legislation of the Church to bring out along what lines the relations between the bishop and religious institutes should be conducted

V. Areas of Bishop-Religious Relationship in a Diocese

The Latin term "relationes" (relations, relationship) means the aggregate of the connections, or modes of connections, by which one person is brought into touch with another. In relation to our topic it means the sum total of multiple modes of connection (bond), such as acts, facts, functions, positions, structures and other conditional factors, by which the diocesan bishop and the religious are brought into mutual directedness, interdependence, co-responsibility, cooperation, collaboration, subordination, submission and communion Both parties relate in order to realize faithfully and effectively the unique mission of Christ and his Church on earth, according to the contribution each is called to make.

Many are the ecclesial circumstances, situations, factors and instances that call for mutual relations between the bishop and the religious. In the light of Canon Law we can distinguish seven areas of relationship:

1) Foundation of Houses
2) Written agreements
3) Exercise of the apostolate
4) Entrusted works of apostolate / ecclesiastical offices
5) Pastoral visitation

6) Sanctions
7) Taxation

V.1. Foundation of a religious house

The residential seat ("sede"/"casa") of a religious community is a religious house In a religious house the community or group of religious live their common life together (CIC 665.1; CCEO 433.1) For the foundation of a religious house in a diocese CIC demands the following (CIC 608-610)

1) A place or locality,
2) The community (at least of three persons — CIC 115 2; CCEO 923),
3) A Superior,
4) An Oratory;
5) Suitable provision for the needs of the members,
6) Ecclesial need or usefulness for the Church and for the institute,
7) Written consent of the diocesan bishop,
8) Formal erection by the competent authority of the religious institute

Among these elements, the consent of the diocesan bishop is important It is a must for the validity of the erection of a religious house (CIC 609, 127 2 n 1, CCEO 436 2, 509 1, 934 2 n 1) The competent religious superior must obtain it before he or she issues the decree of erection It has to be given in written form For the establishment of a convent of cloistered nuns, the permission of the Apostolic See is also needed (CIC 609 1)

Through the consent of the bishop and the consequent foundation, the charism proper to a religious institute is officially received and inserted into the diocesan life and apostolate (CIC 611, CCEO 437 1, 509 2)

Another permission from the bishop is required to build a church attached to the religious house (CIC 1215 3) But according to CCEO 437 1 and 509 2, it is included in the permission given for the foundation of the house

To change the religious house to apostolic works different from those for which it was established, a new permission of the diocesan bishop is necessary (CIC 612, CCEO 437.3) However, such a permission is not required if the change affects only the internal governance and discipline, with due regard to the conditions fixed at the time of foundation of the house (CIC 612,

CCEO 437.3). According to CCEO 437.2, a written permission of the eparchial bishop is required for the construction and opening of schools, guest-houses or similar buildings distinct from the house

For the suppression of a house the bishop is to be consulted, though his consent for it is not necessary (CIC 616.1; CCEO 438, 509.2).

When the text of CIC 609 was formulated, the problem of small houses/communities was presented and the question of the necessity or not of the diocesan bishop's permission for such house was raised But the Code Commission deliberately wanted not to legislate on the phenomenon of small communities because of their great diversity [1]

In this regard the directive given by the CBCI is If the residence is of a stable or regular nature, e g, a residence for the members of a religious institute who are pursuing university studies, a summer villa, a farm-house or a health centre, the authorization of the Bishop is needed. If the residence is only of a temporary nature, the diocesan bishop should be informed about the residence and its purpose. This is to be done by the Major Superior of the Institute When a group of religious, with the permission of the superior stays in a place for a short period, say for a month, as an isolated case (i e, not regularly repeated) the diocesan bishop need not necessarily be informed [2]

CCEO 509 states that an order or congregation cannot validly erect a house without the written consent of the eparchial bishop Accordingly, for the foundation of a house of an oriental religious institute in a Latin diocese, the written consent of the Latin diocesan bishop is required Besides, to ascribe/attach a house of an oriental religious institute to the Latin church, or to ascribe a house of a Latin religious institute to an Oriental church, the consent of the Apostolic See is needed (CCEO 432). If an order or congregation of patriarchal right wants to establish its first house in a diocese (not the first house of that order or congregation, but the first house in that diocese), the consent of the patriarch is required in whose ecclesiastical territorial boundaries exists the diocese in which the house is to be erected. Otherwise (if the diocese in which the house is to be erected is outside the territorial boundaries of the patriarchal church), the consent of the Apostolic See is necessary (CCEO 509.1)

In my opinion, in a territory of double (Latin and Oriental) jurisdiction, if a house of an Oriental religious institute has to be erected in a locality or area which is predominantly peopled by

1. Cf *Communicationes* 12 (1980), pp 136-137

2. Cf CBCI President, *Circular Letter to all the Bishops in India, 1990*

the Latin faithful, with a Latin parish, institutions, etc., then, before giving the required permission for such a house, the Oriental bishop of the place has to consult the Latin bishop, and vice versa.

A written agreement between the bishop and the competent religious superior at the time of the foundation is highly desirable and very useful for the welfare of the diocese and the religious institute.

V. 2. Written Agreement

In the context of bishop-religious relationship, a written agreement ("conventio scripta") is a bilateral contract in a broader sense, made between the bishop and the competent religious superior, which sets forth the norms of a personal nature out of which there arise certain mutual obligations and rights.[3] It establishes, regulates or dissolves particular modes of bond between the bishop and the religious in question According to CIC 37 (CCEO 1514), an administrative act which concerns the external forum is to be effected in writing. Strictly speaking, this is not a legal contract canonized by CIC 1290 (CCEO 1034), and as such it cannot, and does not, create obligations and rights in civil law There is also no question of seeking commutative justice before the civil court or filing a suit to solve the litigation arising from the stipulations of this agreement

CIC 681 2 prescribes a written agreement to be drawn up between the diocesan bishop and the competent religious superior when the bishop entrusts apostolic works to religious (cf ES 1, 30 1, MR 57b, 58a) Such a provision is not given in CCEO. It is obligatory only when a work of apostolate, which belongs to the diocese and is to be carried out in the name and on behalf of the diocese, is entrusted to the religious by the bishop

Concerning the subject matter of the agreement, CIC 681.2 states that it should, among other things, expressly and accurately define what pertains to the work to be carried out, the persons to be devoted to it, and economic matters.

A written agreement is needed and is useful (though canonically not a must) in other cases, especially when a religious house of an institute is erected in a diocese Certain canons of CIC indirectly refer to such written agreements Thus, CIC 612

3 Cf ANDRES, D J., *El Derecho de los Religiosos*. 2nd ed., Madrid/Roma 1983, pp 552-3

speaks of "the laws of foundation" (this means also the conditions connected with pious foundations — cf. CIC 1303-1310; CCEO 1047-1054) and "the apostolic works for which a house was established." CIC 611.n.2 refers to "conditions attached to the consent" given by the diocesan bishop for the erection of a religious house as per CIC 609. According to CIC 678.3, in directing the apostolic works of religious, the diocesan bishop and the religious superiors must proceed by way of mutual consultation. At the time of the foundation of a religious house this can surely be done, and decisions can be formulated through a written agreement, so that the religious can carry out their apostolate in the diocese in a stable and organised manner. CIC 612 affirms that the consent of the diocesan bishop is required if a religious house is to be used for apostolic works other than those for which it was established (CCEO 437.3). This implies that the apostolic cooperation in certain area/s of apostolate (according to the proper apostolate of the institute or the particular need of the diocese) was agreed upon by the bishop and the religious superior of the institute at the time of the foundation. CIC 790 prescribes proper agreements between the diocesan bishop and the religious superior of an institute when religious work in mission territories. CIC 801 and 806 concerning the school apostolate also stand for the desirability of written agreements.

The directive given by the CBCI is thus In the case of works entrusted by the Bishop to an institute, a written agreement between the major superior and the bishop is required in accordance with CIC 681 In other cases, the Code does not oblige religious to enter into such agreements However, considering the signs and needs of the times, it is recommended that this be done with a view to greater co-ordination in the apostolate in the diocese There is no obligation for religious who have already been working in a diocese for a long time to make written agreements with the bishop regarding their existing works However, such written agreements might sometimes be advisable specially if misunderstandings and doubts have arisen.[4]

V. 3. Exercise of the Apostolate

Apostolate is an essential element of consecrated life (EE, 23). The institutes and the religious dedicated to works of apostolate carry out their apostolate in the Church/in a diocese through their apostolic activities (CIC 675, 676 and 588.2; CCEO 416).

The mission and the apostolate of the Church is only one,

4. CBCI President, *Circular Letter to all the Bishops in India, 1990*

committed to her by Christ. However, it is carried out by all the faithful according to the gifts given by God (CIC 208 and 216; CCEO 11 and 19). These gifts are not man-made but God-given; they are from the Holy Spirit (cf 1 Cor:12.4; Rom 12:5-8).

In the case of religious institutes, their particular gifts of apostolate are officially recognized and approved by the Church, and thus for such proper apostolate each institute has received the mandate of the Church (CIC 576, 578, 587. 1 & 2, 586, 588.2 & 3, 676). In accordance with the particular gift of apostolate of the institute, all religious are obliged to work zealously and diligently for the building up and growth of the whole Church and for the good of the diocese (CD 33a). They should also comply promptly and faithfully with the requests and desires of the diocesan bishop for the apostolate, but respecting the character and purpose of the institute of which they are members (CD 35 1; CCEO 542)

Now, one thing is the "proper apostolate," that is, the "**modus apostolatum exercendi**" of the institute, another the "**ipsum exercitium** " The apostolate proper to the institute (*modus apostolatum exercendi*), even of an institute of diocesan right, once it is accepted, acknowledged and approved by the Church as an essential element of the patrimony (CIC 578), is not subject to the power of the diocesan bishop, rather he is subject to it, in the sense that he has to safeguard and protect it (CIC 586.2); he has even to respect it when coordinating the apostolic activities of the diocese (CIC 680) and in fostering, urging and recommending various works of the apostolate according to the particular needs of the diocese (CIC 394, CCEO 203). The law also states that in directing the apostolic works of religious, diocesan bishops and religious superiors must proceed by way of *mutual consultation* (CIC 673 3, CCEO 416). Moreover, in the exercise of apostolic activities, religious should be also subject to their own superiors and should remain faithful to the discipline of the institute If there is need, the bishops themselves should not fail to insist on this obligation of the religious (CIC 678.2; CCEO 543).

The general prescription is that all religious, when they exercise or carry out their apostolic activities, are subject to the authority of the bishops.

> In matters concerning the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship and other works of apostolate, religious are subject to the authority of the bishops, whom they are bound to treat with

sincere obedience and reverence (CIC 678.1).

All religious are subject to the authority of the local hierarch in matters which pertain to the public celebration of divine worship, to the preaching of the word of God to the people, to the religious and moral education of the Christian faithful, especially of children, to catechetical and liturgical instruction and to what becomes the clerical state, as well as to various works of the apostolate (CCEO 415 1).

Omnes religiosi . ordinariorum locorum potestati subsunt in iis quae ad publicum exercitium cultus divini, ad curam animarum . necnon ad varia opera in iis quae sacri apostolatus exercitium respiciunt (CD 35 4).

Omnes religiosi tenentur legibus, decretis et ordinationibus ab Ordinario loci latis in iis quae sacri apostolatus exercitium respiciunt (ES I, 25/1)

Quod autem attinet ad sacri apostolatus exercitium in variis dioecesibus, religiosi sodales subsunt etiam Episcoporum iurisdictioni , salva semper apostolatus natura ipsorum propria (PAUL VI, *Allocution to Superiors General*, 23.5 1964)

Accordingly, the sphere of competence which belongs to the authority of the diocesan bishop and to which all religious are subject is that of the "**exercitium apostolatus**," and **not that of the "modus apostolatus"** (mode, method, form of apostolate proper to each religious institute).

In the light of CIC 678 1 (CCEO 415.1) let us briefly consider various forms of apostolate and the prescribed "subjection" of religious to the authority of a diocesan bishop when they exercise such apostolic activities in the diocese.

V.3.1. *Preaching the Word of God (CIC 762-772; CCEO 609-616)*

CIC 386 demands that the diocesan bishop has seriously to assume the obligation of his "teaching ministry" (CD 12-14) and carefully watch over the exercise of preaching by others in the diocese (CCEO 196). According to CIC 576.2, he is the "moderator" of the ministry of the word of God in his diocese (CCEO 609). While CIC 758 states that by reason of their consecration to God, members of institutes of consecrated life bear particular witness to the Gospel, and so are fittingly called upon by the bishop to help in proclaiming the Gospel (CCEO 608), at the same time, by virtue of CIC 764 and 386.2, the bishop can restrict or take away from religious their faculty of preaching in his diocese (CCEO 613).

The diocesan bishop has the legislative power of issuing particular norms concerning the exercise of preaching in the diocese (CIC 772; CCEO 609, 615). He can prescribe certain types

of preaching, especially at certain times, adapted to the needs of the faithful (CIC 770; CCEO 615). The religious are to obey these directives of the bishop in exercising their apostolate of preaching to the people. Besides, the preaching ministry is exercised by lay religious in keeping with the norms given by the episcopal conference of the place (CIC 766; CCEO 610.4).

V.3.2. *Catechetical-Liturgical Formation (CIC 773-780; CCEO 617-626)*

Priests and religious have in catechesis a preeminent field for their apostolate.[5] CIC 776 prescribes that the members of institutes of consecrated life have to collaborate with, and assist the parish priest in his pastoral care through their apostolate of catechism, with due regard for the character of each institute (CCEO 624.1). The superiors are obliged to see that catechetical formation is diligently imparted in their churches, schools and in other centres of apostolate entrusted to them (CIC 778, CCEO 479) And, observing the prescriptions of the Apostolic See, it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop to give norms concerning catechetics and to make provisions that suitable instruments for catechesis are available, even by preparing a catechism, if such seems appropriate, and by fostering and coordinating catechetical endeavours (CIC 775; CCEO 623)

The liturgical instruction and formation of the faithful is also part and parcel of catechetics (cf SC 14b & 35 5). With zeal and patience pastors of souls must promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful and also their active participation, both internal and external, taking into account their age, condition, way of life and standard of religious culture (cf SC 19). As sacred liturgy and the liturgical apostolate of the diocese are under the direction of the diocesan bishop, religious are subject to the authority of the bishop in this area of apostolate too (cf. SC 45)

V.3.3. *Public Exercise of Divine Worship*

The prescription of CIC 678 1 is that all religious are subject to the authority of diocesan bishop in matters concerning the "public exercise" (celebration) of divine worship (CCEO 415.1). This refers to *public celebration* According to the canonists' opinion, it means the exercise of divine worship which involves

5. JOHN PAUL II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 16.10 1979, nn. 16, 64, 67

many people, which is open indiscriminately to all, or which is known by many, and which is not non-public, private, individual or small group exercise of divine worship. Hence, the "private exercise" of divine worship realized within the religious community and for the community is not the object of the diocesan bishop's competence However, religious are obliged to observe the general liturgical norms and regulations of the Church concerning divine worship.

The general norms given in CIC 834-839 (CCEO 674, 667) are applicable to religious for their liturgical celebrations in their private chapels Then there are the liturgical norms for each kind of celebration.

Through the liturgy, a complete public worship is offered to God This worship takes place when it is offered in the name of the Church, by persons lawfully deputed and through actions approved by ecclesiastical authority (CIC 834; CCEO 668.1). The diocesan bishop is the moderator, promoter and guardian of the entire liturgical life in the diocese entrusted to his care (CIC 835.1; CCEO 199.1) Liturgical actions are not private but are celebrations of the Church itself as the sacrament of unity, that is, the holy people united and ordered under the bishops (CIC 837.1) The ordering and guidance of the sacred liturgy depends solely upon the authority of the Church, namely, that of the Apostolic See and, as provided by law, that of the diocesan bishop (CIC 838 1, CCEO 668 2)

The diocesan bishop can, within the limit of his competence, lay down for his diocese liturgical regulations which are binding on all (CIC 838 4, CCEO 668 2) The bishop should also ensure that the liturgical practices of the faithful are in full harmony with the laws of the Church (CIC 839.2). He is to ensure that abuses do not creep into ecclesiastical discipline, especially concerning the ministry of the word, the celebration of the sacraments and sacramentals, the worship of God and the cult of saints (CIC 392 2; CCEO 201)

CIC 678.1 (CCEO 415 1) refers expressly to the public exercise of divine worship, and not simply the exercise of public worship. For, the divine worship of the Church, especially through the liturgy and administration of the sacraments, whether celebrated or exercised privately alone, or with two or three persons, or publicly with a group of the faithful, belongs always to the "public actions" and not the private actions (cf. SC 26 and

CIC 837, CCEO 668.1).

Divine worship, when done through liturgical celebrations, is always public worship (CIC 834.1, 837, CCEO 381.2, 673), while private worship is done through para-liturgical or non-liturgical/devotional practices. Now, the "public exercise" of private divine worship also falls within the competence of a diocesan bishop, especially when such public exercise of worship is not beneficial to the proper care of souls in the diocese, or when it is not in conformity with Catholic faith and good morals

The religious, therefore, have to observe these norms and try their best not to introduce innovations or adaptations that are not in agreement with the directives of the Church or ecclesiastical authority (cf CIC 846, CCEO 674)

V 3 4 Parish Ministry (CIC 515-555, CCEO 279-303)

Parishes can be entrusted to a clerical religious institute (CIC 520, CCEO 281.2, 282) The diocesan bishop, with the consent of the competent religious superior, can entrust a parish to religious He can also erect a parish in a church of the religious community, with the condition that one priest should be the proper pastor of the parish or, if it is entrusted to a team of religious, one priest should act as the moderator (CIC 517.1) A juridic person cannot be parish priest (CIC 520 1, CCEO 281 2)

The religious parish priest is appointed by the diocesan bishop, with the previous presentation or at least with the consent of the major superior of the religious who is to be the parish priest (CIC 523 and 682 1, CCEO 284 1 & 2) The removal of a religious parish priest can be done by the bishop at his discretion after notifying the religious superior of it, or by the religious superior at his discretion after notifying the bishop of it, neither requires the consent of the other (CIC 682 2, 538, 1742 2, CCEO 297, 1391 2)

To be parish priest is an ecclesiastical office entrusted to the religious, and as such it is truly and properly subject to the authority of the diocesan bishop The religious as parish priest has to exercise the pastoral care of the faithful in the parish community "under the authority of the diocesan bishop" (CIC 515 1, 519, CCEO 279, 281 1) The norms given in CIC 515-555 (CCEO 279-303) and in different provisions of the Code for parish ministry are to be followed by the religious parish priest.

What has been said regarding the religious parish priest is equally extendable to the religious who is assigned as the proper pastor of a "quasi parish" or of a community of the faithful, as provided by the diocesan bishop (CIC 516). The pastoral care exercised by religious either as parochial vicars (CIC 541, 545-552; CCEO 300, 301-303), or as "team priests" (*sacerdotes in solidum*) (CIC 517.1, 542-543), or as a parish administrators (CIC 539-540; CCEO 298, 299) is also subject to the authority of diocesan bishop in accordance with norms of law.

When there is shortage of priests, the diocesan bishop can entrust the pastoral care of a parish to a religious who is not a priest (religious deacon, brother or sister) or to a community of non-clerical religious In such as case the bishop has to appoint some priest who, with the powers and faculties of a parish priest, will direct the pastoral care (CIC 517 2)

If a religious is appointed rector of the church (CIC 557, CCEO 305), the provisions of CIC 556-563; CCEO 304-310 are to be observed

CIC 564-572 deal with chaplains. A chaplain is appointed by the local ordinary (CIC 565). The chaplain for a religious community is appointed by the local ordinary after having consulted the superior of the community, who has the right of proposing a priest after hearing the religious community (CIC 567.1)

V.3.5. Exercise of Missionary Activity (CIC 781-792; CCEO 584-594)

All religious, by virtue of their special consecration to the service of the Church, are obliged in a special manner to engage in missionary work, according to the character of the institute (CIC 783, LG 44, AG 40, PC 20) The religious dedicated to missionary activities in mission territories are subject to the directives/prescriptions given by the bishop or authority equivalent to the diocesan bishop, with a view to promoting, supervising and coordinating the endeavours and activities which concern the mission (CIC 790 2) Making a written agreement between the bishop of the mission-diocese and the institute engaged in the mission is prescribed by CIC 790 1 n.2. Accordingly, the stipulations of such an agreement are also binding on the religious working in the mission.

CCEO 584-594 speak about the evangelization of people and

give general norms for missionary activities; they do not have the above-mentioned prescriptions of CIC in relation to the missionary works of the religious.

V.3.6. *Catholic Schools, Religious-Moral Education (CIC 793-821; CCEO 627-650)*

The schools provide great opportunities and possibilities for catechism, for giving education in faith. This is especially true of Catholic schools It is one of the principal ways of helping the parents to fulfil their role in the education of their children (CIC 796; CCEO 630, 631) The religious who have education as their proper apostolate should keep faithfully to this apostolate and earnestly strive to devote themselves to Catholic education, providing it also through their own schools established with the consent of the diocesan bishop (CIC 801)

The provisions of CIC 802-806 outline the role and functions of the diocesan bishop in this area of diocesan apostolate. And CIC 806 states that the diocesan bishop has the right to watch over and inspect Catholic schools situated in his territory, even those established or directed by religious. He also has the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools Such directives apply also to schools conducted by religious, although the religious retain their autonomy in the management of their schools (CCEO 636 1, 638)

Religious-moral education is also a part of the catechesis (John Paul II, *Catechesi tradendae*, nn 25 & 26) The diocesan bishop has to take care that the religion teachers, both in Catholic and non-Catholic schools in the diocese, are outstanding for their correct doctrine, for their witness of Christian living and for their pedagogical skill (CIC 804, 1 & 2). He has the power to name or approve them and likewise to remove them or to demand that they be removed, if it is required for reasons of religion or morals (CIC 805, CCEO 636 2)

V.3.7 *Media Apostolate* (CIC 822-832; CCEO 651-666)

Religious exercise their apostolate through the media of the press, newspapers, magazines, periodicals, radio, television and other instruments of social communication (cf IM 3 & 10). CIC 822-832 (CCEO 651-666) deal with this kind of Church apostolate.

According to CIC 831.2, the episcopal conference has to lay down norms determining the requirements for clerics and reli-

gious to take part in radio and television programmes which concern Catholic doctrine or morals (CCEO 653 — the particular law has to prescribe such norms; it refers also to the "use of cinema") (cf. also CIC 772; CCEO 609).

The CCBI directs all clerics and religious to keep in mind the Church's teaching on faith and morals when taking part in radio and television programmes. It is recommended that, as far as possible, approval of the diocesan bishop be obtained before taking part in radio or television programmes which concern Catholic doctrine or morals[6]

In the case of written media, the religious require the permission of their major superior, in accordance with the Constitutions, for publishing writings on matters of religion or morals (CIC 832; no mention of it in CCEO). Besides, for various kinds of written works, the religious require approval of permission of the bishop/local ordinary in the light of CIC 822-831 (CCEO 651-666).

To clarify these prescriptions of the law, the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has recently issued an Instruction.[7] It offers the Catholic bishops of the world a summary of their duties and responsibilities in supervising the written media It points out also the responsibility of religious superiors.

Section I	— Bishops' responsibilities in general (art. 1-6);
Section II	— Approval or permission for various kinds of written works (art. 7-13),
Section III	— Apostolate of the Christian faithful in the publishing field, particularly in Catholic publishing houses (art 14-15),
Section IV	— Responsibility of religious superiors (art. 16-18)

V.3.8. *Associations of the Faithful (CIC 298-329; CCEO 573-583)*

It is the competence of the diocesan bishop to erect public associations of the faithful (CIC 312.1.n.3 and 312.2; CCEO 575). The associations working in the diocese are subject to the vigilance of the local ordinary (CIC 305.2; CCEO 577). CIC 317. 1 & 2 refer to the power of the diocesan bishop in the appointment of the supreme moderator and the chaplain for the associations. The bishop can suppress an association which he has established, and also those which the religious have established by apostolic indult and with the consent of the bishop himself (CIC 320.2; CCEO 583.2). Religious are also bound by the particular laws, decrees and ordinances of the bishop or of the episcopal

6. CCBI at Kottayam 1988, Holy See approved on 11.3.1989.

7. CDS Instruction *Supervising the Written Media*, Rome, 30.3.1992, publication 9.6.1992. Cf. *Catholic International*, vol.3, n. 16, pp. 756-760.

conference of the place concerning the membership in or the cooperation with societies or associations.

V.3.9. Exercise of Other Forms of Apostolate

CIC 678.1 (CCEO 415.1) extends the area of subjection and obedience of religious to the authority of the diocesan bishop also to the exercise of other works of the apostolate in the diocese (*alia apostolatus opera/varia opera*). It simply means that the religious are to be obedient to the bishop in exercising all types of apostolic works in the diocese (diverse services like spiritual and corporeal works of mercy, social services, etc.). In this connection the provisions of CIC 285, 286 and 287 concerning public office, business/trade, politics and labour unions (CCEO 383, 384 and 385) are of importance and the religious working in a diocese are obliged to observe them by virtue of CIC 672 (CCEO 427). In these matters they have to follow also the diocesan laws or directives given in view of the need to protect the rights of the Church and the common good of the faithful in the diocese (CIC 287 2, CCEO 384.2) The criteria of "public order" in the life and activities of the diocese can also force the bishop of the place to demand from the religious to follow certain prescriptions in the exercise of their activities in the diocese [8]

CCEO 415 1 has an additional expression, that is, "All religious are subject to the authority of the local hierarch in matters which pertain ad status clericalis decorem necnon ad varia opera " (cf CD 35 4)

V. 3. 10. Public Comportment of the Religious

Public appearance of the religious living and working in a diocese is also a matter connected with bishop-religious relationship CIC 669 prescribes that the religious should, as a sign of their consecration and as a witness of poverty, wear the habit of their institute, determined in accordance with the institute's own law. But the religious clerics who do not have a special habit (e g , S.J., S D.B.) should wear the clerical dress following the prescription of CIC 284, that is, "clerics are to wear suitable ecclesiastical dress, in accordance with the norms established by the episcopal conference and legitimate local custom." The Oriental clerics follow their particular law (CCEO 387) The Oriental religious are to follow the prescriptions of the statutes of

8. Cf. *Communicationes* 13 (1981), p 203

their institute with regard to religious habit, and outside their own houses also the norms of the eparchial bishop (CCEO 540).

ES I, 25.2.d had prescribed that to prevent scandal to the faithful the local ordinary or the episcopal conference could prohibit clerics, both secular and religious, even exempt religious, from wearing lay dress in public. (Though this prescription is not juridically binding after the promulgation of CIC and CCEO, it can be considered for understanding the spirit of the law and for applying it in individual cases.)

V.4. Entrusted Works of Apostolate/Ecclesiastical Offices

To ensure stability in pastoral cooperation and collaboration by the religious, certain forms of organized participation in, and systematic performance of apostolic works are also necessary (MR 57). The bishop, being conscious of it, has to offer the religious enough opportunities for such organized and systematic activities, and shall not consider the religious as "substitutes" or use them for "filling gaps" here and there when his diocesan personnel fall sick or are temporarily absent or on leave or in urgent situations. In an organized programme of the diocese there certainly is the need and opportunity of including also the organized participation and collaboration of the religious in the apostolate of the diocese. In this context there arises the necessity of entrusting certain determined works of the diocesan apostolate to the religious. CIC 681 presupposes this exigency of the diocesan apostolate (CCEO 415 3).

In entrusting works of apostolate to the religious, the bishop has to keep in mind the principle of placing the right people in the right place In this connection there arises the problem of lack of stability and continuity for a considerable period of time of entrusted works, due to the triennial or sexennial or even earlier transfers of religious from one house to another, from one diocese to another, either requested by the religious themselves or necessitated by some just reasons from the part of superiors or communities. An easy solution to this problem associated with the bishop-religious relationship in the diocese cannot be proposed. A possible remedy prescribed by the Code is that "in directing the apostolic works of religious, diocesan bishops and religious superiors must proceed by way of mutual consultation" (CIC 678.3; CCEO 416). The written agreement, which is a must in the case of entrusted works, should include

also the matters concerning the assignment, transfer and removal of persons connected with the works (CIC 681.2).

The works which the diocesan bishop entrusts to religious are under the authority and direction of the bishop (CIC 681.1). So, the entrusted works are subject not only to the pastoral authority of the bishop but also to his own direction. According to CIC 678.1, religious are subject to the authority of the bishop in the exercise of apostolic activities. This is true also in the case of entrusted works However, in the exercise of entrusted works, the religious are subject also to the direction of the bishop, that is to say, to his guidance and moderation, to his pastoral vigilance and visitation and to his other particular and practical criteria and guidelines given to effectively engage in and fulfil the work as he desires and in the way he wills for the good of the diocese. This does not, however, free the religious, while working in the entrusted works, from being obedient to their own superiors and from being faithful to the discipline of the institute (CIC 681 1, 678 2 & 3; CCEO 415.3, 543).

Ecclesiastical offices (CIC 145-196; CCEO 936-978) also can be entrusted to or conferred on religious (CIC 682; CCEO 431). If an ecclesiastical office in a diocese is to be conferred on a religious, the religious is appointed by the diocesan bishop on presentation by, or at least with the consent of, the competent religious superior. The religious can be removed from the office at the discretion of the authority who made the appointment, with prior notice being given to the religious superior, or by the religious superior, with prior notice being given to the appointing authority. Neither requires the other's consent (CIC 682; CCEO 89.22, 431 1)

V. 5. Pastoral Visitation

For the diocesan bishop pastoral visitation is to a certain extent an efficient means and canonically proved way of relating himself, his authority and power to the religious life and to the religious apostolic activities carried out in the diocese. For the religious it is an occasion to personally come in contact with the diocesan bishop and ameliorate their relations with him.

The bishop has the obligation to make the pastoral visitation of his entire diocese at least every five years (CIC 396.1; CCEO 205.1). Persons, Catholic institutes, pious objects and places within the boundaries of the diocese are subject to ordinary episcopal visitation. The bishop may visit the members of religious insti-

tutes of pontifical right and their houses only in the cases stated in the law (CIC 397; CCEO 205.2 & 3). The diocesan bishop has the right and duty to visit the following, even in respect to religious discipline: (i) the autonomous monasteries mentioned in CIC 615; (ii) the individual houses of an institute of diocesan right situated in his territory (CIC 628.2).

To apply these general norms of law on episcopal visitation to the apostolic activities of the religious in the diocese, CIC 683 says: Either personally or through a delegate, the diocesan bishop can visit churches or oratories to which Christ's faithful have habitual access, schools other than those open only to the institute's own members, and other works of religion and charity entrusted to the religious, whether these works be spiritual or temporal. He can do this at the time of the pastoral visitation, or in a case of necessity (CIC 683.1; CCEO 415.2, 420.3).

This canonically prescribed visitation is quite different from the possible visits that the bishop makes for the sake of courtesy, cordiality, fraternity, friendship and esteem for his religious in the diocese, which of course is a great means to fostering the good relationship between bishop and religious.

The true purpose of the pastoral visitation is the good functioning of the communities and institutions of the Church. It gives the bishop an opportunity to praise, inspire and comfort those who labour for the Gospel and to see for himself the difficulties of apostolic activities, to observe and evaluate the whole programme of pastoral action, to touch the hearts of his brothers and sisters, to bring new life to the forces that have slackened off, and finally, to call all concerned to a new consciousness and more earnest apostolic action.

As to the obligations of the religious at the time of the pastoral visitation, the Code prescribes that they are to act with confidence towards the visitator, to whom when lawfully questioned they are bound to reply truthfully and with charity. It is not lawful for anyone in any way to divert the religious from this obligation, or otherwise to hinder the scope of the visitation (CIC 628.3; CCEO 420.2).

When the bishop discovers an abuse or certain abuses at the time of the visitation, he is first to notify the matter to the competent religious superior, according to the gravity of the abuse and the person involved to the local or major superior, and may advise the superior that the situation be corrected. But, if after having notified the situation of abuse, the superior

concerned does not take the necessary measures, or if the superior's action proves to be ineffective and in vain, then the bishop can provide or take remedial action on his own authority (CIC 683.2; CCEO 417) According to CCEO 417 the local hierarch is obliged only to defer the matter without delay to the attention of the authority to which the institute is immediately subject.

V. 6. Sanctions

The faithful of the diocese, especially the delinquent faithful, are subject to the penal power of the diocesan bishop (CIC 1345.1; CCEO 1405 1). However, because of the particular position of religious life, because of the particular competence of religious authority in the Church, because of the *"iusta autonomia"* acknowledged to religious life, and because of the exemption of religious, doubts can arise whether the religious too are subject to the penal power of the diocesan bishop. To clear off such a doubt the Code prescribes· "In all matters in which they come under the authority of the local ordinary, religious can be constrained by him with penalties" (CIC 1320) A particular application of this norm to the area of religious apostolate and to the religious working in the diocese is the following prescription: "For a very grave reason a diocesan bishop can forbid a member of a religious institute to remain in his diocese, provided the person's major superior has been informed and has failed to act; the matter must immediately be reported to the Holy See" (CIC 679). Such a provision is not given in CCEO; however CCEO 415 4 states "Religious who committed a delict outside their house and have not been punished by their proper superior and who have been warned by the local hierarch, can be punished by that hierarch "

The penalty prescribed by CIC 670 (CCEO 415.4) is not obligatory but only facultative (*potest*) Accordingly, to rectify the situation of a delinquent religious in the diocese, the bishop can make use of other pastoral means

The punishment indicated in CIC 679 is the prohibition of religious from his/her remaining/residing in the diocese (cf. CIC 1336 1.n 1, 1337, CCEO 1429). It is a *"ferendae sententiae"* and not a *"latae sententiae"* penalty (CIC 1336.2; CCEO 1402.1) and so it does not bind the guilty party until after it has been imposed (CIC 1314; CCEO 1408)

The reason for imposing this penalty is "*urgente gravissima causa.*" In the context of CIC 678.1 (CCEO 415.1), the cause is connected with the matters in which the religious are subject to the power of the diocesan bishop in exercising their apostolic activities in the diocese.

Finally, in the application of this penalty CIC 679 demands three conditions: (i) the bishop has notified the major superior of "*urgente gravissma causa*" about the religious in question; (ii) the major superior has failed to act; (iii) the bishop is to report the matter to the Apostolic See

V. 7. Taxation

CIC 1263 says that the diocesan bishop, after consulting the finance committee and the council of priests, has the right to levy taxes on public juridical persons subject to his authority for the needs of the diocese. He can also impose an extraordinary and moderate tax on other physical and juridical persons in case of grave necessity (cf CCEO 1012) In this regard a doubt was raised whether the words of c 1263 — "public juridical persons subject to his governance" — comprise also external schools of religious institutes of pontifical right. The response given on 24.1 1989 by the Pontifical Council for the Authoritative Interpretation of Legislative Texts was: *negative*[9] To provide for the needs of the seminary, the bishop can impose a levy in the diocese Every ecclesiastical juridical person is subject to the levy for the seminary, including private juridical persons which have a centre in the diocese (CIC 264; CCEO 341). In the light of these prescriptions the diocesan bishop enjoys the power to impose a tax on the religious

In this regard the directive given by the CBCI is

(1) The diocesan bishop has the right to levy on public juridical persons subject to his authority a tax for the needs of the diocese, this right of taxation does not apply to religious of pontifical right (2) He may impose an extraordinary tax on other physical or juridical persons only in cases of grave necessity, e g, floods, other natural calamities, very serious needs of the diocese (3) In addition to this, the bishop can impose a tax on all juridical persons in the diocese to provide for the needs of the seminary in accordance with canon 264 However, all religious should contribute generously to the needs of the local church (CIC 222 & 640) [10]

Cf CCEO 25, 341, 1012

---

9 Pontifical approval, 25 5 1989, Promulgation, 10 8 1989

10 Cf CBCI President, *Circular Letter to All the Bishops in India*, 1990

Conclusion

Religious life does not belong to the hierarchical structure of the Church. However, it is necessarily and closely connected with the hierarchy of the Church.

The CIC and CCEO prescribe and specify the general and particular aspects and areas of relationship between the bishop and the religious. My purpose has been to present these provisions of law in a simple and systematic way.

In the light of these prescriptions of the CIC and CCEO we have definite structures and ways of maintaining and fostering good, healthy and harmonious relations between bishops and religious. Now, it is up to the bishops and the religious to know and understand these provisions of law, these structures and ways of relationship, and to implement them in the practical areas of diocesan life and apostolate.

The degree, extent and various levels at which a real relationship should take place, cannot be fully and perfectly formulated in law The concrete expressions of living relationship are far more complex and demanding, and they require greater attention and personal commitment, than the legal formulations.

"*Quod non est in codice non est in mundo*" cannot be applied to the issue of bishop-religious relationship The document *Mutuae Relationes* will have to be taken as a companion guide to the provisions of law, to get further orientation, inspiration and guidelines for good relations between bishops and religions.

Problems may continue to occur But it is the responsibility of both parties to seek just ecclesial solutions. This task is real, sensitive and sometimes difficult to achieve. But, with good will and a spirit of total dedication to the cause of Christ in his Church, a good, fraternal and friendly relationship can be maintained

VJTR 58(1994) 249-252

Listen to the Spirit

"Be strong and work for I am with you" (Heb 2:4)

May 1st is celebrated as Workers' Day It reminds us of the social conditions of workers In the early stages of industrialization salaries and working conditions were decided exclusively by the owners of factories, and workers were ruthlessly exploited Our economy has changed much Workers are organized and often hold a very powerful bargaining position Today we may be more concerned with those who are left out of the process of production, the millions of unemployed, both in East and West, and with unorganized labour in our country, in vast rural areas, who are still at the mercy of land-owners or contractors, experts in dodging the laws which protect the workers

The problems of work have today grown far beyond the social sphere Our world is gripped with the fear of the progressing destruction which threatens the planet, the basis of all human life We watch helplessly how modern technology pollutes our atmosphere, poisons the waters, destroys the surface of the earth on which we live, fills the living space with deadly destructive radiations All this is done in the name of more production and higher living standards Is this the meaning of work?

The problem goes still deeper, and it becomes personal. Those who are fortunate and have a good job spend long hours at work and often overwork For what purpose? Of course they need the salary for their living, for the family. But is money the only meaning of their work? Many surely enjoy their work and find an interest in it· our minds must be kept busy, and we love to be occupied and to produce. But what is the aim of all their work? To produce more luxury goods, to achieve faster processes However, with this comes the time of boredom, aimlessness, frustration We realise that we have become part of an immense process, wheels in a gigantic machine which is geared to ever greater production Is this human dignity? Our life is empty, divided between work and amusement. What are we living for?

On Workers Day we think of and pray for the immense army of workers. We shall surely not forget the jobless people who are excluded from the complex machinery of production and pushed to the margin of our success-oriented society. We silently hope that our earth will not be turned into a desert through our work. And so the Spirit

may call us to a deeper meditation on the meaning of work in our life, in the life of each person and of the world.

Work is part and parcel of human life. It has its origin and meaning in God's own work of creation The Bible describes this work as order: out of chaos a cosmos is formed, with its balance of light and night, sky and earth, sea and land Each creature has its place and function. Man and women are placed in this world not as one more addition to the variety of species, but to continue and fulfil the work of God. They bear God's features, they are his image and likeness They are told to imprint this image on the earth through their work. multiply, subdue, humanize it Through our work the earth receives human features, for better or for worse

We shall never understand our world if we look at it as an immense mechanism which moves with precision within its own orbits. The earth has received a human face that reflects the mystery of God and looks beyond the physical things towards a goal that cannot be seen; it is kept moving by a human heart with a destiny beyond the rolling ages of time, in God's eternal love God Himself is our human destiny and the goal of all creation

So our human family set out on its journey with God's blessings to make this world human We stopped living in caves, like animals, and built houses We no longer depend on the fruits of the jungle for food, but cultivate fertile fields We discovered the wealth hidden in the depth of the earth, all elements, ores, oil. We built cities and produced wonders of architecture and art in many styles which witness to our inexhaustible creativity, treasures which tell all generations of ever new visions of beauty and greatness, with which God has endowed His children. The richness of our cultures is the permanent, ever-growing exhibition of the fruit of human work spread over the continents

God never gave us binding norms of how to build His world and to fulfil His creation. He sent us on our task with infinite freedom The Bible tells us in the inimitable simplicity of its language how God "took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it" It all belongs to us "you may freely eat of every tree of the garden." But He adds a warning "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Gen 2 17) God alone is creator. Each creature has its place and task in the harmony of creation Only in this harmony, in the divine order, are happiness and fulfilment found Don't break out of this order and make yourself the judge of good and evil If you want to become the centre, you ruin the world and its order, you destroy yourself So don't eat of the tree of knowing better what is right and wrong and what leads to your own fulfilment: "For in the day you shall eat of it you shall die" (*ibid.*)

This is what actually happened. It is too tempting for us to take life into our own hands and break out of the order which binds us to the harmony of creation, and to build our own world. "You will not

die: ... your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God" (Gen 3:4f). We have done it through the ages So begins another chapter of human work which runs parallel to the history of the creative human genius. It is the history of our self-destruction and the destruction of the world.

Work becomes labour: "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Gen 3:19) All work is arduous, it demands effort, concentration, endurance; it is tiring, it often becomes monotonous All this is still part of the creative process which is rewarded in the satisfaction of achievement and the joy of the finished product. But sin has broken into the human world and has dehumanized work We read the ancient biblical accounts of Israel's vocation which begins with the bonded labour under the hostile government of Pharaoh The people are forced to work for the wealth and power of their enemies who had the intention to destroy them They were liberated, but in their own history Israel experienced the same enslaving exploitation through overbearing kings. Samuel had warned the people against choosing a king who "will take your sons . to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots to plough his grounds and reap his harvest He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants and you will be his slaves" (1 Sam 8 10-18). These are the social patterns of sin and of exploiting power which are repeated and reproduced in ever new forms through the history of our broken human family We know too much of it in our own country. Work is no longer the exercise of human creativity and fulfilment, but humiliation and agony it destroys human life

Even worse Sin destroys our world, our air and water, and mother earth who gives food to her children This ultimate threat of sin could be realized only in our age because of the phenomenal power we have gained through technical ingenuity and organizational skills Human work has acquired cosmic dimensions Now it has become possible for greed for wealth and power to threaten the very existence of our human family

This is the tragic chapter of work in a sinful world which destroys human life, human society, the human world But it must be complemented by the meditation on redeemed and redeeming work

It begins with the law of the Sabbath In the beginning the Sabbath-rest was a social law All need rest, not only to recover energy after tiring work but also to find distance from work and involvement. Even if your work is rewarding and fulfilling, you need rest, you should not be drowned in activity but find again the centre of your being, the life-spring of your work If your work has become labour, you need rest even more, to shake off its burden at least for a day and to breathe freely

It is quite natural that in the Bible the day of rest becomes the day of the Lord. Distance and freedom from absorbing work enables us to find — perhaps to rediscover — the meaning of our work and to

integrate it into God's work of creation. So Israel saw it in the later stages of its theology. God rested on the seventh day (Gen 2:2). God is more than his creation. God is beyond all that can be seen and done. We too must rest after the week's work because our destiny, the goal of all creation, reaches beyond the limited goals for which we toil on our working days. We must become conscious again that all our work is part of God's own creation placed into our hands, to be carried on and fulfilled. humanizing the world, imprinting on it our features, God's image Are we doing this or are we working at a caricature, distorting God's creation and imprinting on the earth a confused, disfigured human face?

Work and rest, days of toil and Sabbath, have received a still deeper meaning through Jesus Christ. He experienced all the features of human work In Nazareth it was the ordinary job of a worker in daily routine But during his ministry he experienced in a unique manner the creative, life-giving power of God when he proclaimed the reign of God's love and made it tangible in the signs of healing and liberating people from destructive demonic powers These were Jesus' glorious days when he was surrounded by people who had largely lost the experience of the life-giving God But Jesus experienced also frustration, the total rejection and destruction of his work, when he was abandoned by all, ridiculed by his enemies, put to death — and laid to rest on the eve of the great Sabbath day As he had worked in the love of his Father so he died in him — and he rose God is life The Sabbath-rest turned into the day of eternal life for him — for the world

So in our Christian practice we have shifted the Sabbath to the day of the Resurrection We celebrate Sunday in the Eucharist where the paschal mystery of death and resurrection is realized in the community of the believers not as a remembrance of the past but in its actual presence in our life, in the life of the Church

From this celebration flows the Church's work to continue Jesus' mission for the world to awaken faith, to heal, reconcile, teach in many forms, to work for a better world and society. In the same celebration also the depression and hopelessness of many is relieved. Not only do they find new strength to continue their struggle for a fuller life but also the patience to endure, the courage even to face death in the assurance of eternal life in Jesus Christ

So the day of work becomes a day of prayer, the awareness of God's presence not only in solitude and silence but also in our activity. God's own work of creation is placed into our hands, it is realized whether our work is a success or a failure, conspicuous or small. Teilhard de Chardin told an old lady who was stitching a garment for her grand child and wanted to know where she could find God. "God is on the tip of your needle "

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Forum

Should We Have 'Priest and Lay'?

At the very start of this short presentation let me say that we will always have persons performing the duties of a priest and other persons performing other functions so necessary for humanity to attain wholeness, which is really what holiness is all about. What this article is attempting to do is to do away with the word 'lay' as understood in the Church a person who is immersed in so-called 'secular' tasks, a person who is not as committed as a priest is to God and to His Church, a person who belongs to the class of the un-ordained, a person who is, supposedly, not as much a witness to transcendent values as the priest or religious I have no hesitation in accepting the word 'lay' as meaning a person who is not an expert or professional in a particular field What I object to is the use of the word 'lay' as a class or non-status symbol

One of the rediscoveries of this age is the dignity of the human person and the equality of persons This is evidenced by the strong affirmation of human rights and the clamour for these rights all over the world. This phenomenon is also exemplified in the Women's Lib movement as well as the demand for a closer look at child labour and the tragedy of the street children

Many years ago Vatican II underscored the basic dignity of the human person in that marvelous first and foundational document, *Lumen Gentium* Try and absorb this statement

> As members, they share in a common dignity from their rebirth in Christ They have the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection They possess in common one salvation, one hope and one undivided charity Hence there is in Christ and in the Church no inequality on the basis of race or nationality, social condition or sex

In *Christifideles Laici*, Pope John Paul II has said

> All the members of the People of God — clergy, men and women religious, the lay faithful — are labourers in the vineyard At one and the same time they are all the goal and subjects of Church communion as well as of participation in the mission of salvation. Every one of us possessing charisms and ministries, diverse yet complementary, works in one and the same vineyard of the Lord . All share in a deeply basic meaning: that of being the manner

of living out the commonly shared Christian dignity and the universal call to holiness in the perfection of love.

Finally, a marvelous and mystical passage pointing to the very basis of equality is found in the book, *The Road Less Travelled*, by M. Scott Peck, M D.

> Why does God want of us to grow? What are we growing toward? What is it that God wants us? God wants us to become Himself (or Herself or Itself) We are growing towards Godhood God is the goal of evolution It is God who is the source of the evolutionary force and God who is the destination That is what we mean we say that He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end

Is this not what Jesus meant when He said, "Be you perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"?

Therefore, all of us, priest and religious and others, have the same source of life and the same destiny Of course, since we are persons and consequently unique, we travel on different roads in differing styles to our eternal goal In other words we, having differing charisms or talents, work our way through various jobs, various ministries We are like the facets of a diamond that reflect and refract in countless yet distinctive modes the rays of the same Sun

In view of all that has been expressed above, should we have a blanket term like 'lay' that historically and existentially has given and is giving rise to a chasm between what seem to be two classes (I almost used the word 'castes') of people in the Church, classes that can be classified with much justification as privileged and less privileged? Can we not talk instead of priest and tailor, doctor, shopkeeper or what-have-you? Let us not forget that we belong to or, rather, we are one with Him who washed feet, who emptied Himself to take the form of a slave All of us, door-keeper or director, teacher or technologist, priest or parliamentarian, are servants, one of the other In this way we will be true witnesses of One who came to serve, to heal, to reconcile, to love

It is true that the world makes use of differences in work and, therefore, earning capacity, to create status and power However, this should not be for the followers of Him who said, "Anyone who wants to become first among you must be slave to all " This is the challenge that faces us Christians, followers of Christ Will we take it up? Will we proclaim the Gospel values in a society enthralled with 'showing off'? Should we have priest and lay in the Church?

"Sylvian Rest"
70, Gautham Lane No 1,
Andheri, Bombay, 400058

Noel D'SILVA

Note

Christian Ashrama Aikiya Meeting

The 8th Meeting of the Ashrama Aikiya was held at Anjali Ashram, Mysore, 1-6 November 1993 About sixty members were present from all over India, and also a few observers, some from abroad The Aikiya was founded in 1978 under the inspiration of Fr D S Amalorpavadass (Swami Amalorananda) as part of the "new vision" of Vatican II and the National Seminar on the Church in India (1969)

At the end of the meeting it was decided to issue a Press Release as it was felt that there was a rather widespread ignorance and misunderstanding of Christian Ashrams, both within and outside the Church, partly due to their own lack of communication

The two main themes of the Satsang were, "Christian Ashrams and Hindutva" and "The Role of Christian Ashrams in the Church and in Society " Papers were contributed by Fr Ishwar Prasad, I.M S , Fr Francis Clooney, S J and Sr Sara Grant, R S C J (Hindutva) and Sr Corona Mary, O S M and Fr Sebastian Painadath, S J (Ashrams in the Church)

Regarding Hindutva it was agreed that in view of the constant use made of this term today — the wide variety of connotations given to it — Christian Ashrams needed to make it very clear that their purpose in adopting a traditional Indian life-style and modes of worship and meditation was not to convert caste Hindus, nor to take refuge under the political umbrella of the majority community, but rather to reclaim the cultural and spiritual heritage which Christians share with all other Indians, but of which they had been deprived by earlier policies inspired by a theology now recognised by the Church as having done less than justice to other religions

It was however stressed that Christian ashrams cannot identify themselves with any one tradition in a way that would compromise their response to the teachings of Jesus which calls them to stand with both "broken" members of society who form the vast majority in the country, and with people of other faiths and communities Christian Ashrams should be *places of deep prayer and reconciliation*, open to all men and women who share a common desire to go beyond all labels and live by the basic values present in all religious and spiritual traditions, and aspired to by every human being This was high-lighted by Fr Sebastian Painadath's paper, "Theological Perspectives of Christian Ashrams," showing how in this way of life even the most apparently

conflicting aspects of human existence can be harmonized by its contemplative dimension, and Sr Corona Mary's insights into the possibilities offered by the ashrams for the development of a balanced feminist theology

The role of Ashrams in the Church was seen in the perspective of the forthcoming Synod of Bishops on the Consecrated Life in the Church and in the World

The unanimous testimony of all those who spoke of their vocation to this way of life, however varied their situations and the obstacles they had to face, made it impossible to doubt that there was here a powerful movement of the Spirit creating a "new thing" in the Church which could have a revivifying effect on religious congregations. The fear was sometimes expressed that Ashram life was incompatible with the charism of one or other congregation, but the radical living of the Gospel in terms of the Indian situation is at the heart of every religious vocation, and any community which lives this vocation fully will inevitably approximate more and more to the Ashram life-style, which is in essentials flexible enough to be compatible with almost any form of ministry engaged in by religious in India today.

The hope was strongly expressed that religious superiors and bishops would, after due discernment, give encouragement, trust and moral support to any priest, sister or lay person called to the Ashram life Experience has shown that when the call is genuine, material resources are always forthcoming, often in unexpected ways

In conclusion it was felt that India had in the Ashram tradition a valuable contribution to make to the Synod's reflection on the charismatic nature of the consecrated life and its immense possibilities of adaptation to the needs of the contemporary world, in India and beyond It was resolved that the Aikiya should bring this to the attention of the Indian delegates to the Synod and supply them with necessary data, through the Secretary of the CBCI Commission for Religious

Sara GRANT

Book Reviews

Biblica

The Books of the Old Testament. By David F Hinson (Revised Edition) Delhi: ISPCK, 1993. Pp xiii-210 Rs 35 ISBN 81-7214-118-1

Hinson has written three introductory books for the study of the Old Testament in the Study Guides series — *History of Israel, The Books of the Old Testament* and *Theology of the Old Testament* (*VJTR* 57[1993] 164) The present book is his second volume and references are made to the other volumes in the course of this introduction to the books of the three parts of the Tanak (Jewish way of referring to the First Testament)

This Study Guide follows the format of the series with its study suggestions at the end of each of the nine chapters under such headings as *Word Study, Review of Content* and *Bible Study* Contemporary biblical information, diversity of opinions, the author's own opinions, his understanding of the nature of the Old Testament, the origin of the text traditions, the processes of re-interpretation, composition and origin of the Canon are balanced, modern and clearly presented He excludes conservative and fundamentalist approaches and is very well informed He is a good teacher

To have so much valuable information on the Old Testament of an introductory nature, concise and clearly expressed, recommends this book. Its price itself demands that all types of libraries place it in their shelves for the Christian community I am surprised that many teachers of Scripture do not even know of this valuable series

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Isaiah 56-66. By Grace I. Emmerson Sheffield· JSOT Press, 1992. Pp 117 £ 5.95 ISBN 1-85075-382-2.

Commenting upon Isaiah 56-66 the authoress notes that· "The importance of the message, the balance and artistry of the structure, and the impressive quality of the poetic imagery make the study of Third Isaiah a rewarding experience" (Preface)

Normally "Trito-Isaiah" is combined with "Deutero-Isaiah" and is the poor sister in the relationship Emmerson has highlighted the contribution of this "book" to OT prophetic literature The bulk of space and attention is given to questions which arise from a historical critical approach to Scripture Though Emmerson rightly emphasizes the ultimate importance of the whole of Isaiah and sees Is 56-66 as an integral part of the whole book (see Introduction), yet much of the discussion concerns questions and problems related to the questions raised and studied by the Historical Critical Method — structure, literary form, authorship and date and the relationship to Isaiah as a whole

The hypotheses about the type of problems being faced by the postexilic community are exposed and critiqued, the nature of the prophetic role is elaborated, and the significance of this prophetic "book" stated

One feature which a reader will constantly note is the uncertainties which surround all historical questions related to this book. Emmerson explains the hypotheses of major authors, evaluates them and offers bibliographies for further reading From this perspective this is a valuable guide and will enable an intelligent study of the text However for the study of the text itself readers will have to turn to contemporary commentaries.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Hosea. By Graham I Davies. Sheffield· JSOT Press, 1993. Pp 122. £ 5 95 ISBN

1-85075-393-8

This is a further valuable addition to the Old Testament Guides series The author also wrote the study of Hosea for the *New Century Bible Commentary* series (1992). These guides intend to provide contemporary and well-informed knowledge for students of theology to assist them in their intelligent reading and study of the biblical books They provide an overview of major questions about the books and information on background, context, themes

This book is of particular value because of the consistent interest in the world within which the prophet lived and exercised his ministry The chapters on *Hosea and His Time*, *The Religious Situation in Hosea's Time* and *Hosea and Israelite Society* enable the student to enter to some degree into the world of the Northern Kingdom of 740s-30s.

An important ideological contribution is the shift of emphasis from chs 1-3 to the whole book Therefore, Davies considers Hosea's marriage only in ch 6. Often Hosea is known only from chs 1-3 These chapters must be related to chs 4-11 and the book approached in a holistic manner A further pedagogical point made by the author is to describe Hosea's teaching and its development in chapter 2 This reminds us that our ultimate concern is the Word of God as mediated through this prophet's ministry The other concerns are all subordinate to the actual teaching

The author is aware of the traditional work on Hosea and the recent new trends in the study of the prophets. Davies integrates two types of approaches to the study of the Bible — the historical critical and modern literary criticism

A volume worth adding to the Hosea section of a good library

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Bible and Mission in India Today
Edited by Jacob KAVUNKAL and F H KRANGKHUMA. Bombay· St. Pauls, 1993 Pp. 336. Rs 96. ISBN 81-7109-179-2

This book contains papers read at the first meeting of the Fellowship of Indian Missiologists (FOIM) in August, 1992 The Fellowship is an ecumenical enterprise and in itself opens up many possibilities for clarifying the meaning of mission and thus bettering mission living and action within the churches.

However, as a book it suffers from many weaknesses. First of all, the scope is extremely broad as the contributors meander through the length and breadth of the Old and New Testaments and related material. Hardly any literary genre is omitted though the really historical books of the OT received little attention.

The editors call our attention to the fact that writers are generally not professional scripture scholars but people who try to use the results of such scholarship Thus is a praiseworthy objective but in many cases it ends up by giving the reader a series of quotations from various authors However the compilers of those quotations do not take positions or critique the quotations

For those who have read widely in recent scripture studies the book will offer nothing really new However, beginners in the field may find here an overall picture that could lead to fruitful discussion. And this, I think, is the main value of the book. The papers were meant to stimulate discussion and I would suggest that they be used by the readers in that way They may thus provide a basis for deeper penetration into some aspect or other of the whole missiological enterprise

The book if read simply as a book will, I think, prove disappointing. It did for me Many of the writers have trouble with the English language. The book does not move forward in the elucidation of a theme. This was inevitable, given the nature of the book, but even many of the essays seem to try to say everything that in any way pertains to the topic given without coming to any conclusion. Some are lifeless; others, like the essay of Dr Patmury on proclama-

tion, certainly give signs of conviction about the message and even if one may disagree on some points, one is moved The contributions of the two women, Sr Mary Lobo and Dr Sakhi M. Athyal, say things that need to be said, even if they are not new things. The final piece by Dr Roger Hedlund on the biblical approach to other religions has the merit of asking many relevant questions even if the answers are not given.

While wishing the Fellowship success in its efforts we hope that future books will be more selective, focussed and better written so that they can shed light on new aspects of a subject which is vital to the life of the Church of which each Christian community strives to be a living and life-giving member

Jerome F. DURACK, S J.

Lectionary

When Christ Meets Christ. Homilies on the Just Word By Walter J Burghardt, S J Mahwah Paulist Press, 1993 Pp vi-241 $ 14 95 ISBN 0-8091-3373-3

The Paulist Press has published eight collections of Burghardt's homilies This collection of thirty-six homilies covers some days of the Advent-Easter and Ordinary-of-the Year periods, to which are added nine wedding homilies and homilies for special occasions in the lives of individuals (anniversaries) and groups (seminars, graduations, baptisms.)

The major thematic characteristic is expressed in the phrase 'the Just Word' Burghardt wanted to show how the Word coming alive in so many diverse situations and texts is the Word that insists on "faith that does justice" (p 1) He summarizes his major insight in these terms. "The *whole* of scripture is social, oriented to community, bent on expressing and effecting fidelity to a relationship within humans and with the earth stemming from a covenant with God .. " (p.1). The themes of faith and justice run through these homilies with a quiet passion.

A characteristic of each homily is the careful structure and clarity. The homilist makes three distinct and related points, clearly enunciated and explained, using Scripture with insight and care and themes from contemporary theology and modern life The homilies reveal a Christian humanist with a sensitive pastoral concern. They are an authentic exposition of the Gospel responsive to contemporary life and our multiple obligations to create a just world as our faith teaches us

I would presume all the collections have the same quality and therefore would enrich both the reader's faith life and guide and stimulate homilists

P. M. MEAGHER, S.J.

Pentecost 3. Interpreting the Lessons of the Church Year By Luke T Johnson Minneapolis Fortress Press, 1993 Pp 64 $ 4.50 ISBN 0-8006-4184-1

We reviewed many of the Proclamation 5 series A booklets recently (VJTR February 1994, p 94) This booklet concludes the Sundays after Pentecost (twentieth to Christ the King) Many pastors would profit from the short introduction in which Johnson discusses lectionary preaching and the implied tensions each text has an openness and closure as text, the three or more texts fragmentary in nature and iuxtaposed in the lectionary of a particular day have been "prepacked" in a particular way, and finally these texts are to be part of liturgy which mirrors both real life and an ideal type of life The danger is that preachers will abandon the lectionary, with its restrictions and the potential power of God's Word to challenge, and preach their own sermons The actual interpretation of each Sunday's readings reveals the author's biblical competence, pastoral sensitivity and efforts to grapple with the challenges of life and the Word These booklets are expensive for Asia yet very instructive.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Silent Voices, Sacred Lives. Women's Readings for the Liturgical Year Compiled and edited by Barbara Bowe, R.S.C.J., *et al* Mahwah. Paulist Press, 1992. Pp vi-464 $ 22.95 ISBN 0-8091-3336-9

This book is a *supplementary lectionary* to the official lectionary of the churches. Some readers may wonder why the recently revised lectionaries need supplements In a valuable introduction one of the editors, K.Hughes, discusses the origin and nature of present lectionaries and indirectly of the Scripture text itself Apart from the fragmentary nature of all readings which are not continuous, the Bible and lectionary originated in a patriarchal world and religious communities

To a very marked extent the story of woman is absent so that "women may well ask where are our histories and our hopes? Where do we look for exemplars of strength and tenderness in living out the Christian life?" (p 5)

I am aware that as many Christians are unaware of their deep unconscious ethnical, racial, social (caste) prejudices and the sinfulness involved, so also many women as well as men are unaware of the damaging and oppressive nature and comprehensive effects of patriarchy The authors were stimulated to work on the project of producing this supplement in a seminar on *Feminist Hermeneutics and Worship*

A supplementary reading is given for every day of the liturgical year Each reading has a few guiding lines of introduction Inclusive language is used and texts have been adapted The selections are taken from both Testaments and various ancient (some "modern") sources — e g early Church writers, lives of famous Christian women, the apocryphal texts, Augustine, Jerome, Julian of Norwich As in the lectionary, we find continuous readings running through one or two weeks and discrete fragments from larger writings A short descriptive bibliography is given of all the sources used in the book. The table of content is detailed and there is an appendix with the calendar of women saints and a scriptural index.

The content can have various uses: as a supplement to the liturgical reading, replacing one or other reading, for community or personal prayer and faith sharing and for study and discussion

The fare is rich and well chosen We can only share the hope of the authors "Let these tales enrich your repetoire of the ways God has moved among us and the ways women have struggled to respond with integrity — for here is the kernel of ourselves" (p 10)

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Dialogue

In Search of Christian Unity. Basic Consensus/Basic Differences Ed Joseph A Burgess Minneapolis Fortress Press, 1991 Pp viii+260 ISBN 0-8066-2302-9

Every thinking and sincere Christian must be anguished about the split in Christianity Unthinking Christians, or those who think less might not bother too much This is our situation as long as we don't hurt each other, let it remain. But thinking Christians cannot get out of their mind Christ's last desperate prayer — that all may be one He/she cannot stop asking, Why are we different? Not, Whose fault is it? But, Are the differences so fundamental that they cannot be defused, or diffused? Did God/Christ mean us to be so different?

The first thing one notices about this book is its honesty and openness Though springing from a Lutheran-sponsored meeting, which consisted largely of Lutherans, others — Episcopalians, Methodists, Orthodox, Roman Catholics — were also represented and are given generous space in the book.

But basically the approach is Lutheran. And this is good It is right that readers of the Vidyajyoti Journal, presumably mostly Roman Catholics, should know what others think of

ecumenism and how they approach it.

The Editor is realistic: "Hundreds of ecumenical dialogues have produced statements of clarification, convergence and consensus, yet in most cases the churches involved have made little progress towards unity." Most of the book tries to answer the question, Why?

The Lutherans of America and the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, France, held a conference on "Fundamental Consensus and Church Fellowship" from Jan 30 to Feb 6, 1987, at Rio Grande, Puerto Rico For 'Church Fellowship' read — unity For 'Fundamental Consensus' read — that which is needed for unity in diversity, not uniformity

At first the participants attempted to seek and stress fundamental differences Gradually they veered round to looking for a fundamental consensus The different stresses given to these terms do not make for clarity

That there is a need for greater clarity is obvious And not only clarity As one reads the lengthy and learned papers, one gradually comes to the conclusion that sincerity and scholarship are not enough Unless we become like little children and look at the issue with the single-minded simplicity of a child, we will never come to that unity for which Christ prayed so desperately

In fact, as Walter Kasper points out in his penetrating essay, the unity that Christ wants in the Church he founded is not something that can be 'sought out' or 'created' It is there already Are not all Christians baptised into the one Spirit of Christ? The need is to experience and become aware of this essential and basic unity

One wonders if struggling with words and meanings will achieve this Frustration arises from the fact that even after much such struggle, even after agreement has been reached between academicians and theologians, the churches do not seem to come closer Robert W Jenson feels that such frustration is appropriate and useful yet

Gerard O Forde tackles the difficult and delicate question of 'Justification by Faith Alone' Ambiguity begins with the definition of terms. As the author himself admits — there is much mist here. Nor does he cast much light on the problem. Nor does Carl Peter's Roman Catholic Response add much more light.

One of the problems in ecumenical discussions is that within each Christian sect there are splits and divisions, as Ralph Bohlmann points out, specifically among Lutherans John Travis in his Orthodox Response, wonders where does the authority within the principle of representational democracy lie? What is the meaning of Ordination, of Commissioning? How are commissioned ministers to be regarded in relation to 'ordained' ministers and laity? (This, of course, is a problem that is also vexing thinking Catholics today) Travis stresses the personal relationship with Christ We preach not the Scriptures, he says, but Christ who is the Word and communicates himself to us

This theme is repeated by Orthodox Archbishop Methodius in his essay on Fundamental Consensus and Church Fellowship Christ is the Head of the Orthodox Church and the Holy Spirit is the Soul, he insists So the Orthodox *cannot* dialogue with rationalists like Bishop Jenkins of Durham The Archbishop laments "the shameful scandal that those who proclaim their allegiance to Christ, the Son of the Living God, are still unable to join together at his Table " He points his finger at the Protestants, who have cut themselves off from the Church and rejected the Church's infallibility and then engaged in an endless search for the *'consensus fidei'* which, the Archbishop continues, "in my view is none other than the teaching of the Orthodox Church, in which alone is the life of the Holy Spirit " Is the Spirit then limited to the Orthodox Church? Has the Archbishop forgotten Christ's saying that the Spirit goes where he wants and no one knows when he comes and where he goes (cf Jn 3.8)?

Many Catholics, though, would agree with the Archbishop when he insists "The Orthodox attach paramount significance to the preservation of Christian truth and are determined not to yield to the temptation to proclaim a Christian message which is conformed to the passing images of the present age"

In his 'Lutheran Response' William Rusch quotes Yaroslav Pelikan who calls 'traditionalism' the dead faith of the living; and 'tradition' the living faith of the dead The Archbishop sometimes seems to slip into the former, he feels.

And so it goes on. Statement — Response Generally each participant is very kind to the others But I fear that not much light is shed on problems As do many of the participants, I too felt a sense of frustration. Yet the sincerity, the zeal, the time and the money spent on the effort *cannot* have been wasted And surely talking together is a considerable advance from fighting with each other with blade or bullet or even with words

R.H LESSER

Celebrating Community. Prayers and Songs of Unity Gemeinschaft feiern Gebete und Lieder der Einheit Célébrer la communauté. Prières et chants d'unité Celebrar la comunidad Oraciones y cánticos de unidad Compiled by Janet CRAWFORD, Terry MacAARTHUR and Thomas F BEST Geneva WCC Publications, 1993 Pp ix-86 $ 7 95 ISBN 2-8254-1109-4

As is obvious from the title, this book for worship is in four languages The world conference of the Faith and Order Commission in 1993 had as its theme *our belonging together within the one body of Christ* The group responsible for preparing worship material for the conference realized the need for an ecumenical worship book which gathers material appropriate to this central ecumenical concern

Gathered together for ecumenical prayer services are a selection of Opening Prayers, Credal Affirmations-Responses, Prayers of Confession of Sins (with Responses), Prayers for Unity and Litanies (Intercessions) At various points the authors suggest hymns originating not only in the countries of the four languages which are printed with original text, music and translations in each of the four languages.

For those interested to trace the origin of some of the collected material the sources are indicated and an index of the hymns and responses is also added

The contents of worship are biblically rooted, sensitive to the actual situation in our contemporary world, realistic, moving and deeply demanding The book will be very useful for ecumenical worship and in a special way for the Unity Week in January each year

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J

Christian Ashrams. A Movement with Future? Edited by VANDANA Mataji Delhi ISPCK, 1993 Pp vi-162 Rs 45 ISBN 81-7214-130-0

Much has been written in the past twenty years on Christian ashrams in India, descriptive, sociological, polemic, even theological Many ashrams mushroomed in the post-Vatican period of the Catholic Church and there is even an Ashram Aikiya, a sort of spiritual federation of Ashrams, and an Ashram outreach to other countries But after more than fifty years of its existence (a hundred if we remembers Brahmabandhab Upadhyay's short-lived venture in Jabalpur) the ashram movement has entered a moment of crisis and self-reflection as is evident in the title of this book. The book offers twenty interesting reflections around the theme of the Ashrams, presented at a meeting in the Jeevan Dhrara Ashram at Jaiharikhal in May 1991 and at the seventh satsang of the Ashram Aikiya in the Anjali Ashram of Mysore in November of the same year Most of the au-

thors are deeply involved in the movement.

The crisis of which we spoke is possibly an expression of a general crisis of contemplation in the Indian Church. But it has been made more acute by the shift in the Church in the past twenty years or so from a desire for inculturation to a social critique of Indian culture from the perspective of justice The dalit problem has taken centre stage in the theological and, at least partially, in the pastoral concerns of the Church Ashrams, specially the so-called "kavi" ashrams oriented to contemplation and inculturation, seem to the critics to make friends with social forces that have oppressed the dalits. These forces have also drawn the antagonism of the thinking classes of the country as a result of the saffron wave of the nineties Added to this, there has been a shift from an interest in meditation techniques (for the "religious elite") to popular religiosity where some see an unsullied expression of authentic spirituality In this atmosphere ashrams draw flak

The ashramvasis, as they call themselves, are aware of the present challenges. In fact the editor of this book had already published twenty years ago a booklet with the title *Social Justice and Ashrams* However, the ashramvasis manifest neither a false sense of guilt nor a reaction of self-defence The topics collected here cover many of the classical themes. transcendence, rootedness in the Eternal, silence, dialogue, the guru, spiritual wholeness The sociopolitical reality was also a topic in both the meetings.

Today's tensions are perhaps best expressed in a letter of George Soares-Prabhu to Vandana Mataji and the reply to it by Sara Grant and Swami Amalaraj, on behalf of the Aikiya meeting, both printed in an appendix. The reply places the tension in the history of contemplation v activism which runs through the life of the Church in the last two or three centuries (only?) and must be resolved in terms of the plurality of charisms within the same community. The ashramites find themselves more in contact with the poor and the common people than Soares-Prabhu seems to allow. The dalits v. brahmins history is thought to be an oversimplification which needs nuancing if we must be true to actual concrete experiences. The ashramites also think that involvement in social issues will be strengthened rather than weakened by the contemplative dimension, which itself might lead theologians and activists to explore the possibilities of a more effective non-violent involvement

This is an interesting book for all who follow closely the life of the Indian Church My only criticism is that the article of Paul Knitter on "The Uniqueness of Christ and Christianity" has no other claim to feature in the book than the accidental fact that the author was in India during the second meeting and was invited to speak to the Aikiya on his favourite theme

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J.

Journal Mangalore Diocesan Chair in Christianity Vol 5, Mangalore University Shanti Kendra 1993 Pp 142

The fifth volume of *Journal* (cf VJTR 57 [1993]320) contains three articles on Mysticism, Eastern and Western, two on religion in the Post-Soviet Republics, and two that deal with stress management from the perspective of religion and of psychology and psychiatry The editor and Head of the Department, Fr P T D'Souza, offers a study on the reflective Poems of Sri Aurobindo The study on microbiology seems less connected with religious or theological issues, but it shows trends in this science that may produce important changes in our society. We congratulate the Department for another series of studies emerging from the milieu where the university and Christian faith meet

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Reference

The Works of Philo Complete and Unabridged. Translated by C D YONGE (Foreword by David M Scholer) Peabody Hendrickson, 1993 Pp xx-918 (six maps) $ 29 95 ISBN 0-943575-93-1

As a subheading to the title we find "New Updated Edition." A reader may wonder when the earlier edition was published and what is new Yonge's translation appeared in four volumes in 1854-55! The new aspects are the single volume, numbering of sections keyed to the classical Loeb translation (12 Volumes — Greek English texts with introduction notes, indexes), reset in modern easy to read type with a new foreword, notes and newly translated sections A new edition was needed because the Loeb translation is too expensive and studying the New Testament, inter testamental Judaism, Hellenistic-diaspora Judaism are currently centres of attention and important for an adequate contextual study of most NT books There is also no other available translation of the complete works of Philo at a reasonable price for the normal library and student/teacher of the NT

The bulk of Philo's writings are expositions of Moses and more specifically of Genesis and Exodus He also wrote philosophical treatises and apologetic-historical works His method is often allegorical and his world view combines Jewish biblical traditions and middle Platonism He is a key witness to Hellenized Judaism in the Diaspora in the period of Jesus, Paul and the writing of the Gospels Paul's letters and most of the Gospels come from that world where Hellenized Judaism flourished Therefore for the study of the NT as well as Judaism, Philo is an important writer The publishers have responded to the needs of ordinary students, teachers and libraries by republishing both *Works of Josephus Complete and Unabridged*, translated by William Whiston (1987) and *Philo*

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Vol. LVIII | MAY 1994 | No. 5

VJTR 58(1994) 265-283

Jesus the Ecologist

R.J. RAJA, S.J.

Professor of Scripture at St Paul's Seminary (P B 36, Tiruchirapalli 620001), the author has long been concerned with the biblical basis of ecology Here he rereads the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, his parables and his miracles showing their ecological significance

Most of us, familiar with the nomenclature Jesus the Son of God or the Son of man, Jesus the Lord or the Saviour, Jesus the Servant or the Prophet, etc., will find the title "Jesus the Ecologist" not only strange and jarring but also quite anachronistic.[1] The scope of this article is, in the context of the monumental environmental holocaust which is taking place at an accelerated speed, to explore the Gospels and find out if the life of this Palestinian Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, has anything to say about nature and its manifold creatures, and about human beings and their responsibility towards the created universe in all its varied splendour

Son of the Soil

Jesus was an ordinary human being who walked the rugged mountains and deep ravines, the dreadful deserts and treacherous *wadis*, and who was surely familiar with the plants, trees,

1 B. HILL, *Jesus the Christ Contemporary Perspectives* Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991, p 135

flowers and fruits, the birds and animals of the locality, and at home with the varied seasons of the year with the extreme climates that made his land what it was. A son of the soil, he was in close touch with all that the Palestinian landscape offered. From birth to death he was moulded by the Palestinian earth, air and water, which stand revealed in all his preaching and teaching.

The word "nature," a term that is derived from the Hellenistic world of thought, did not find a place in his discourse. Even the terms "creation" or "to create" are used very rarely (cf. Mk 10 6; 13.19, 16 15, Mt 19·4) in his preaching But his penchant for and sensitivity to the presence of God in nature and all the created realities cannot be missed by any reader of the Gospels For Jesus, nature "speaks and preaches about God" the creator and provider [2]

The loving care of God for the creatures is expressed by Jesus in ch. 6 of Mk in terms that remind one of Ps 104, where God is said "to have made them all in wisdom" (104 24) and sustains them assiduously, so much so that "these all look to him to give them their food in due season" (104 27)

The Palestinian countryside with which Jesus was so familiar serves as a starting point for his teaching on the care and solicitude of God for human beings Vivid and picturesque details from nature are brought in to support his teaching. It is God who as a loving "Father" (cf Mt 6 26, 10.29) feeds the birds of the air who "neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns" their provisions for the morrow (Mt 6·26, Lk 12 24) [3] The lilies of the field "need neither toil nor spin" (Mt 6.28, Lk 12 26). The grass of the field has only a fleeting existence, but need not worry (Mt 6 30, Lk 12.28). By themselves all these are insignificant creatures, they are here today, but tomorrow they die, they

2 G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* London Hodder and Stoughton, 1969, pp 117-120; R.J Raja, S J, "Wisdom Psalms and Environmental Concerns," *VJTR* 57(1993), pp 201-202 Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance Forging a New Common Purpose* New Delhi Viva Books, 1992, pp 255, 265, 368

3 Lk 12 24 mentions "ravens" instead of Mt's "birds of the air" (Mt 6.26), since the former are neither taken care of by human beings, nor do themselves take precautions for the supply of food for the morrow. By highlighting a hopeless case Lk wants to stress the fact that if even the ravens could thrive without worry and if even these are looked after by God, why need we humans worry? Cf N Geldenhuys, *The Gospel of Luke*, Grand Rapids: Wm.B Eerdmans, 1979 p 358; J Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke*, AB 28A, New York. Doubleday and Company, 1985, p. 977

are not gifted with an immortal soul, nor with an intelligence and will with which they could stand comparison with human beings. But the Father nourishes them all and clothes them, gives them shelter and guides them to their destiny. Thus in Jesus' eyes everything in nature "pours forth speech .... declares knowledge" (Ps 19:2) and serves as pedagogues to beings who are endowed with intelligence and will. If the wisdom and omnipotence of God looks after his mute creation, how much more will he not care for his "living icons," the humans? (cf. Gen 1:27; Ps 8.4). If the disciples are more important than birds and plants, then God who looks after the latter, will certainly provide for the former! What an extraordinary lesson Jesus gives through a very simple and ordinary medium!

This fatherly concern of God for human beings is once again highlighted by Jesus through the example of such little birds as the sparrows God who is "Father" (Mt 10:29; Lk 12·6) cares even for these insignificant creatures which are sold for food at a dreadfully cheap price. They are ever present to him, and his maintaining power sustains them all [4]

Jesus does not merely use these ordinary creatures — birds, ravens, sparrows, lilies, grass, etc — as pedagogical helps effectively to get his message of God's care and concern for us across to his audience, composed largely of rural folk. He also shared

> his experience of a loving God dynamically present in the world. He is encouraging his listeners to have eyes that see and ears that hear the movement of God in the world Jesus was passing on to his listeners what he had discovered about God's reign in the natural things around him [5]

Besides, by the use of the term "to be anxious about" four times in nine verses of the same ch 6 of Mt (26, 27, 28, 31; cf Lk 12.22, 25, 26, 29), Jesus warns us against anxiety and preoccupation about the day-to-day needs Since God the provider and protector looks after even the least of his creatures, his care and concern will surely be extended to the daily necessities of the humans. Where is then the need to hoard things for the future? (Mt 6·19-21). Jesus seems to be warning both the poor and the rich, the former not to be fretting and fuming over transitory

4. Since sparrows were not eaten, the word here may mean any small, insignificant bird Cf I H Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, Exeter Paternoster Press, 1978, p 514; Geldenhuys, *op cit*, p 351 Al Gore, *op cit*, p 255

5 Hill, *op cit*, p 135, E. Cardenal, *Love*, ET, London (1974), p. 24, cited in J Moltmann, *God in Creation. An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* London. SCM, 1989, pp 63-64

things, or giving themselves to cheating, robbery, violence and injustice in the procuring of them, and the latter to unlock their stocked barns, the storehouses of their greed and avarice, and let the poor have their legitimate needs catered for. God's generosity and liberality in providing for his creatures becomes an invitation as well as a challenge to use the abundant resources of nature for the amelioration of the lot of the destitute and for an equitable sharing among all, thus creating a society where there is peace and harmony with one another and with God the creator, the caretaker and the conserver of everything created

Growing with Nature

The events at the various stages of Jesus' life, as portrayed in the Gospels, are associated with nature and created realities To start with, both Lk and Mt paint *the story of his birth*, the greatest event in history, on the colourful canvas of nature While Lk talks about the hill country which Mary reached in order to meet Elizabeth (1 39) and about the mighty heavens and the resourceful earth rejoicing at the birth of Jesus (2 14), Mt speaks about the celestial phenomenon, a stellar harbinger leading the magi from the East to the new-born king (2 2 9-10) Lk especially paints a pastoral tapestry around the birthplace of Jesus There are the flock of sheep and the shepherds (2 8), there is the feeding trough for the animals (2.7 12), "the sign of God's being the sustenance of his people "[6] The presence of the domestic animals may be presumed here (cf Is 1 3) The whole atmosphere is one of peace — a baby, the sky, domestic animals, feeding place, etc. The God who guides and feeds his creatures is at home in their company For, "His immortal spirit is in all things" (Wis 12.1)

Mt's *portrayal of Herod* ordering the little children to be killed (2:16-18) comes as a shocking contrast to the bucolic peace that pervades the surroundings of Jesus' birth Where children ought to "grow and become strong" (Lk 2:40-52) in an atmosphere of peace, love and joy, they are nibbled in the bud and extinguished — a reality similar to what happens in our times when children are undernourished, made to breathe polluted air, and drink contaminated water, because of our callousness towards nature We poison the rivers and the seas, we denude the forest cover,

6. C.H. GIBLIN, "Reflections on the Sign of the Manger," *CBQ* 29(1967), p 100, R E. BROWN, *The Birth of the Messiah*. New York. Doubleday, 1979, pp 170-174, 399-401, 420-424

we vitiate the atmosphere, we destroy natural resources, and thus, as in "the classic example of genocidal abuse of power"[7] by Herod, and before him by the Pharaoh (Ex 1:16), we too play havoc with the lives of our children. Herod and the Pharaoh symbolize the destructive potentialities which modern technology and unbridled consumerism have unleashed into the world (as, e.g., in the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster in Russia and, closer at home, the death of thousands through the leakage of toxic gas from the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal) Herod stands as a warning to all our modern agents of pollution and destruction of God's beautiful creation, the locus of his divine presence (Wis 13:1-9)

If the birth of Jesus has been painted on a canvas that speaks of harmony in nature and of tears at the wanton destruction of God's supreme gift in nature, namely children, the event which catapults Jesus into the ministry, namely *his baptism* is displayed in riotous colours that remind us of the creation story in Genesis

All the four evangelists mention the waters of *Jordan* in which John was baptizing (cf Mk 1.9-11, Mt 3 13-17, Lk 3.21-22; Jo 1 31-34) and the "Spirit-dove" that descended from the heavens upon Jesus The whole scene takes the mind back to the first words of Genesis· "The Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" (1 2), namely, God was at in creation bringing about order and harmony from chaos and darkness. The baptism of Jesus signals the starting point of the new creation

It takes place in the river Jordan highly symbolic for the Jews and emotionally charged with memories. The Jordan made a way for the Jews to cross over into the land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey (Josh 3-4). Its waters cleansed the leper, Naaman, the Syrian, from his dreadful disease (2 Kings 5·8-14). Its meandering course, the inflow from the melting snows of Hermon, the luscious thickets of shrubs and plants and evergreen trees, the secure habitats of wild animals (cf. Jer 49:19), were all associated with the waters in which Jesus was baptized, right in the midst of the material, vegetal and animal species of the world. The opening of the heavens symbolized the joining of heaven and earth, a new beginning of the encounter between God and the universe. Added to all these is the

7 B T. Viviano, "The Gospel according to Matthew," in *New JBC*, London. Geoffrey Chapman, 1990, p. 636

polyvalent symbolism of the dove (cf. Gen 1:2; 8:8, Deut 32:11) with its gentle nature, its moaning like one in birth pangs, its flight on high, etc.[8] The allusions to the Spirit hovering over the primordial waters (cf. Gen 1:2) and the dove that was sent out on a reconnoitering mission from Noah's ark (cf Gen 8:8) cannot be missed here.

Thus the whole scene of the baptism brings before one's mind the wondrous variety of creation Nature and creation serve as a background over which Jesus himself presides, ushering in "the new heaven and the new earth" (cf Is 65:17, 66·22; 2 Pet 3:13, Rev 21 1). Jesus is at the centre of creation — its beginning, middle and end

The *last events* in the life of Jesus — his *agony, death* on the cross and his *resurrection* — are once again set in the backdrop of nature The *mountain* where he takes himself to prayer slides down into the Kidron valley (Jn 18 1), and is clustered with age-old olive trees, a sight familiar to any visitor to the Holy Land even today Olive trees survive even in a deluge (cf Gen 8·11) Olive groves are most cherished and honoured among the Israelites along with wheat and barley, vines, fig trees and pomegranates (Deut 8:8, Judg 9 8-10, etc) They denote the restored Israel, "fair and goodly" (Jer 11 16, Hos 14·6) It is at this mount of verdant olives that Jesus gives his eschatological discourse (Mt 24·3, Mk 13 3), it is from the same mount of olives that Jesus initiates his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21 1, Mk 11 1, Lk 19:28-29)[9]

Such is the background in which Jesus faces Jerusalem, the place of his final encounter with the forces of evil as well as the place of his ultimate destiny In the midst of his intense agony, nature did not desert him Mother earth with all her fineries — the valleys and the hills, the rocks and the slopes, the dust and the earth and the evergreen olives with their clusters of fleshy fruits — were all there with him during the hours of his intense sorrow when he "offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears" (Heb 5 7)

Natural phenomena did not fail to accompany him to his death. Great cosmic portents such as the splitting of the rocks as well as the earthquakes (Mt 27·51), a solar eclipse and deep darkness (cf. Mk 15.34; Lk 23·44-45) announce the setting of

8. E.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, New York. 1958, pp 27-46

9. J.L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* London. Geoffrey Chapman, 1966, pp 625-626.

Jesus, the Sun.[10] Nature shudders at the loss of one of her own, the chief of all her children. But the unassailable cry of confidence, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit" (Lk 23:46) overrides and silences the shout of despair, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34; Mt 27:46). At the same time, by *raising Jesus* from death, God proved that he cannot be a silent witness of the cataclysms in nature The resplendent risen body of Jesus walks the verdant garden against the backdrop of a glorious sunrise (cf. Jn 20:11-16, Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1-2; Lk 24.1-2) — a silhouette to suggest that in the risen Lord the created universe has found its restoration and meaning

In the resurrection of Jesus wounded nature receives its healing and wholeness. The saving power of the resurrection extends not merely to human beings but to all creation In this sense the acclamation by the Samaritans that "He is the *Saviour* of the *world*" (Jn 4:41) acquires a new meaning, an ecological resonance in a mad world racing towards environmental disaster.[11]

Re-creating Nature

Not only the physical association of created realities with the life events of our Lord, but also a new way of looking at these events, arouse in us eco-vibrations and eco-sensitivities.

Both the *incarnation* of our Lord and his *resurrection* can be viewed from an ecological angle The incarnation should not be considered only in terms of a "coming down of God to the world," but also as a "coming forth of God from the world," an immanence of God in the universe, a God who continually reveals himself in creation in its varied hues and colours.

> In Jesus, God comes as a caring and creative God, revealing that the divine has been with us all along in all of the cosmos in beauty and creativity . In Jesus is revealed a God who relates intimately with creation, not as subject to object, but as "I" to "Thou" in a relationship as intimate as parent to child, life-giver to living person Since Jesus comes from creation, from the evolution of our earth and our species, then we know that the earth and humankind must be sacred He reveals that the earth is worth caring for The earth, its resources, and its people are not "things" to be used They are, rather, gifts to be cherished, nurtured and shared [12]

10 R. Brown, *A Crucified Christ in Holy Week* Collegeville· The Liturgical Press, 1986, pp 30ff

11 Hill, *op.cit*, pp 141-142

12 Hill, *op cit*, pp 142-143, cf Raja, "Wisdom Psalms," *VJTR* 57(1993), p

Through the *incarnation* Jesus takes on the form of a God who embraces all creation in love; he assumes the power of creation, re-creation, healing, recovering and ennobling nature; he puts on the mantle of sympathy and empathy towards the suffering ones among his creatures [13] Thus through the incarnation Jesus becomes (like YHWH in Exodus) a champion, a God defending as well as liberating his creatures against destructive forces, against the pollution of air, earth and water and the irresponsible devastation of water sources and forest covers, all of which lead us to an ecological holocaust already now foreseen in a not far off horizon

The *Resurrection* too must be seen from the new long-neglected ecological perspective In the resurrection of Jesus we witness the ultimate goal of God's plan for the universe. The human body, material things, vegetation and the animal kingdom and the whole cosmos have put off their "secularity" and put on a new "sacrality " Hence the resurrection is a call and a challenge to us to reverence mother earth with her myriad creatures in their variegated splendour of sacredness and godliness

Besides, the *resurrection* also gives us a hope against all hopelessness. in the risen Lord death and destruction are vanquished not only for him and for those who believe in him, but for all the vast expanse of creation It is this hope which must free us from helplessness in the midst of the mindless and colossal ecocide that is taking place right in our midst The resurrection fills us with courage to beat the destructive swords of irresponsible autocrats, industrialists, and politicians into productive ploughshares, their devastating spears into prooning hooks (cf. Is 2:4) In fact, the resurrection gives us an ecological empowerment to commit ourselves to the defence of creatures by an involvement in environmental movements working for the healing of this universe [14]

Schooled in Nature

Jesus was an assiduous student of nature "He shares with every Jew the Old Testament faith in God the Creator and Lord,

202, id., "As It was in the Beginning," *VJTR* 55(1991), p 681, Al Gore, *op cit* , pp 242-243

13. Hall, *op cit* , pp. 142-144

14. *Ibid.* pp 145-146, R.J Raja, "Eco-Spirituality in the Psalms," *VJTR* 53 (1989), pp. 637-638.

who called creation into being, cares for it and governs it."[15] Jesus experienced in nature the handiwork of God (Ps 8; 148 etc.). Hence he approached all the created realities with a certain "sacramental sensitivity."[16] He enriched his teachings with sundry examples from nature. His penetrating insight brings all the material, vegetative and animal species in creation into the service of his teaching.

Thus the sun and the rain (Mt 5:45), the scorching heat and the south wind (Lk 12:55), the clouds and the showers (Lk 12:54 the earth and the sky (Lk 12:56), the flash of lightening (Mt 24:27), the rock and the sand (Mt 7·26), the seeds and the grains (Mk 4·2-8), the lilies and the grass (Mt 6:28-30), the thorns and the thistles (Mt 7·16), the figs and the grapes (Mt 7:16), the moth and the rust (Mt 6:19-20), the sparrows (Mt 10:29) and the eagles (Mt 24:28), the ox (Lk 13:15) and the dogs (Lk 16:21), the fish and the serpent as well as the scorpion (Lk 11:11), the sheep and the goats (Mt 25:32) — all nature in its varied splendour take part in the teaching of Jesus. "Every thing stays and remains in its own place, which it does not owe in the first instance to reflection upon any doctrine of creation and final consummation."[17] All creation is immediately present to him and he, in turn, is at home in it. Schooled in nature, Jesus embellishes his teachings with a rustic wisdom which savours eco-friendliness and eco-sensitivity

Seeing Creatures Anew

Parables, fables and stories are the simplest and most effective way of communicating an idea or giving an instruction. They teach heavenly realities through an earthly imagery [18] Parable are widely used as teaching aids both in the OT (cf. 2 Sam 12.1-14, 14:1-11, 1 Kings 20·35-40, Is 5:1-7; Ez 17:2-24, etc.) and in the NT, especially the Gospels, the lowest count of them being 35 and the highest including allegories, proverbs, riddles, similitudes, etc., adding up to roughly 72. In every one of these Jesus makes use of some created realities or other to bring home the intended lesson.

---

15 BORNKAMM, *op cit*, p 117, RAJA, "Eco-Spirituality," pp 638-645

16 HILL, *op cit*, p 137, KAJA, "As It was," pp 682-683, ID., "Wisdom Psalms" pp 204-206.

17 BORNKAMM, *op cit*, p 118

18 W F ALBRIGHT and C.S MANN, *Matthew* (AB) New York. Doubleday, 1971, p cxxxii describe a parable as "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning."

Since parables are polyvalent in meaning, they have immense potentialities for relevant interpretations according to different situations. The ever new interpretations of the parables will never be exhausted. This encourages us to enter into the parables to unearth the immense ecological potential which lies hidden in them. To limit ourselves within the space of an article, we shall focus our attention on the parabolic chapter Mt 13, with its seven parables around the Reign of God which forms the high point of Matthew's Gospel.[19]

Common to all these parables is the rural setting alive with nature and the rural audience which is able to appreciate them, feels at home with them and relives them The pictorial elements are all drawn from the daily life of the Palestinian villagers.[20]

The three parables on sowing (13.1-9, 24-30, 31-32) with the explanations on the first two (13 18-23 36-44), take up most of the chapter. The fact that the Israelites, once settled down in Canaan, took to agriculture and farming is well known All the elements associated with agriculture — sower, seeds, fields, stones, rocks, paths, good soil, sun, air, thorns, weeds, shrubs, plants, trees, branches, nest, birds, grain, bundles — are colourfully displayed as if on a canvas The way Palestinian farmers sowed the seeds in the land before ploughing it has been observed by Jesus and brought into the service of his teaching (13 1-9) [21]

What is now of importance to us is to experience and elucidate the ecological vibrations these parables produce in the minds and the hearts of the readers At a first reading, the parable of the sower gives us the sense that the good news about the coming Reign of God will have an enormous success in spite of the immediate opposition and indifference. But given the polyvalence of parables, if we strike the ecological chord underlying it the parable opens up a different world of meaning. We should not be hostile to creatures and destroy them at our will and pleasure (cf seeds on the path eaten by the birds); much less can we be crassly indifferent to them (cf. seeds that fell on the rock or under thistles) The parable is a warning against wanton neglect and destruction of natural wealth through pollutants,

19 Mt 13 contains 58 verses of which the seven parables and the explanation of two of them take up the first fifty verses. Of these the materials, up to v 35 (namely four parables) find parallels in Mk and Lk.

20 J Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* London. SCM, 1972, p 11

21 *Ibid.*, pp 11-12

effluents, chemicals, poisonous and infectious gas, and through human greed and consumerism. We should rather be like the good soil nourishing the seeds, protecting them, making them sprout, nurturing them, helping them to grow, flourish and bear fruit in an atmosphere of friendliness and fellowship. We should be willing to play the role of a Bahuguna or Medha Patkar in defending, fighting for and promoting environmental concerns. Nature is entrusted to us as trustees and guardians "to till and to keep" (Gen 2:15), and not as autocrats to do as we please, to kill and to extinguish! Our sacred duty towards nature is to cherish it and make efforts to conserve it and make it grow thirty, sixty and a hundredfold!

The parable of the weeds among the wheat (13:24-30.36-44) is peculiar to Mt and is seen as a rewriting of Mk 4:26-29 by Mt for the needs of his community [22] While the teaching of Mk is the providence and power of God to make the seed grow by itself (Mk 4:27), the point which Mt wants to stress is that the Christian community should not try to anticipate and take upon itself the final judgement of God on sinners. In both Mk and Mt, however, there is agreement that it is ultimately God who decides the final outcome (Mk 4·27, Mt 13:29-30). The active, universal and sovereign will of God presides over all things, good and bad Further, both evangelists underline the fact that the seeds bore fruit. While Mk notes "the seeds should sprout, and grow ... The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear" (Mk 4.27-28), Mt writes that "the plants came up and bore grain " (Mt 13·26), regularly recurring events constantly observed by all.

Rereading both the parables together from the point of view of environmental concerns, it is abundantly clear that God is the author who presides over the destiny of all his creation, good and bad, the wheat and the weeds Like a devoted parent, God takes care of the seeds by providing them with good soil, water, manure and sunlight. He watches over them assiduously while the earth puts forth its blade, then the ear and then the full grain in the ear upto the final stage of its ripening. Mk may have put it more picturesquely; but Mt does not fail to make the some point when he says that "the plants came up and bore grain" (13·26), and when he makes the master (God) say, "Let both grow together until the harvest" (13.30). Mk surely underscores the ever watchful care of God for nature: "The earth

22

produces of itself, first the blade, .. and the grain is ripe ... and the harvest has come" (4:28-29).[23] It is he "who neither slumbers nor sleeps" (Ps 121:4), ever keeps awake to protect his creation from all grave dangers.

Both these parables address themselves to anyone with an ecological sensitivity to sing the praises of God with the psalmists (cf. Pss 148, 104, etc) for his wonderful providence and protection over the creatures, at the same time they also present a challenge to us to be co-defenders co-conservers and co-promoters with God of everything in nature which is his handiwork.

The parables of the mustard seed and the leaven (13·31-31) may be taken together since both betray a marked Palestinian colouring and deal with the overruling purpose of God which assures growth in the case of the mustard seed and the rising of the size of the dough into large loaves [24] Besides, these two parables are paired, one speaking about "a man" and the other about "a woman" thus "reflecting the even-handed fairness of Jesus to both sexes "[25] Jesus shows himself equally familiar with the open air experience and the domestic toil In the former he speaks about the grain of mustard seed, the sower, the field, the shrubs, the trees, the branches, the birds and the nests, and in the latter, the woman, the leaven, the dough and the loaves

An ecological look at the parables must first and foremost make us see the invisible hand of God in everyday things, in nature and at home [26] Even such little things as the tiny seeds and a small piece of leaven can do marvels, given the time and the circumstances Out of the most insignificant things God can do mighty wonders Nothing in nature may be considered worthless The two parables teach us, in one sense, a great regard and respect for all things great and small in nature, since they all belong to God's domain and they image God himself

A further lesson that Jesus may teach in these parables is unstinted generosity and hospitality to everyone, especially the

23 Although the term "of itself," "of its own accord" (4 28) may describe the gradual growth of the plants by themselves, without any visible cause, yet, in comparison with the Reign of God, the emphasis here is on God's hidden and gradual action in bringing about their growth and maturation up to the time of the harvest Cf JEREMIAS, *op cit* pp 151-152 D J HARRINGTON "The Gospel according to Mark" in *New JBC*, p 606

24 JEREMIAS, *op cit* pp 146-147

25 VIVIANO, *op cit* p 656

26 JEREMIAS, *op cit* p 149 RAJA, "Eco-Spirituality " pp 640-648

needy. The tiny seed when grown into a huge tree affords the needed shelter to the wandering birds, and the little leaven penetrating into the dough transforms it into large loaves of bread to feed family and friends. Nature is a generous mother and provider and we may not destroy and annihilate her by avarice and greed, but rather imitate and follow her in promoting a culture of sharing and solidarity. We should also show hospitality to nature itself by protecting her from wanton destruction and promoting her through a commitment to and involvement in environmental safety

Lastly, these parables also remind us that there is nothing in nature which we may discard and destroy as wicked, bad or worthless The audience of Jesus knew as well as Jesus that the high tree and the mass of dough stood for the "powers of the world" (cf Ezek 31), for malice and wickedness (cf. 1 Cor 5·6), respectively Jesus transforms them both into agents of goodness He can write straight in crooked lines! The two parables suggest to us that even poisonous herbs and harmful plants and animals play a role in God's plan We do not know the intentions of the creator and his powers and plans. We need only to stand in admiration and bow down and accept God's will for each and every creature [27]

The last three parables (13 44-50), the first, about the *treasure in the field* (13.44), the second, about *the pearl of great value* (13·45-46) and the last concerning the *net thrown into the sea* (13·47-50), are peculiar to Mt While the first two may go together, the third could well be joined to the parable on the weeds among the wheat (13 24-30), since in both a selection and a rejection is involved

The scene portrayed in the first two parables is something familiar to the Palestinian gentry Because of its geographical position between Mesopotamia and Egypt, the land of Palestine had witnessed many a battle between these powers taking place in her midst Burying one's valuables in the ground was common during skirmishes and wars, since there were no safety vaults and there was danger of the treasures being carried away as booty by the battling forces Similarly, though not a seafaring people, the Palestinians knew about pearls fished out of the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean,

27 JEREMIAS, *ibid*, pp 224-227 speaks of the link between both the parables from the point of view of content

and valued them as highly as other peoples of antiquity or of today.[28]

Here Jesus comes out as a cute observer of the history and habits of his people. He knows the priceless value of the treasure and the pearl, and underscores the immense joy (13:44) which is the result of "the overwhelming experience of the splendour of their discovery."[29] In the first one he draws the picture of a poor person who has to sell everything in order to buy the field, the second one speaks of a rich one, a pearl merchant!

Although at the outset we may not perceive in these parables any ecological dimension, yet the joy in the discovery of the treasure and the pearl could be an invitation for us to open ourselves in awe and wonder at the mysteries of the universe and cry out, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth!" (Ps 8)

The last parable about *the dragnet* (13 47-50) with good and bad fish could be paired with the parable of the wheat and the weeds, treated earlier (13 24-30), since both speak of "separation" of the good and the bad at the end of times But what is relevant from the environmental point of view is the abundance and the variety of fish both eatable and non-eatable that were caught into the net "In the lake of Gennesaret twenty-four different species of fish have been counted unclean fish which has almost the appearance of a snake (cf Mt 7 10, Lk 11 11) and all fish and non-edible marine creatures, such as crabs, which were regarded as worthless "[30] The parable reveals not only a certain knowledge about fishing but also the fact that in creation there is always abundance and there is room for both the good and the bad, the useful and the apparently non-useful God, the munificent creator, is also the master who looks after all, even as he cares for the wild asses, the badgers and the young lions (cf Ps 104)

From the above study of a few parables from an ecological angle we see how Jesus was a student of nature, a keen observer of the terrain of Palestine, of its seas and its mountains, of its plants and its animals, of the habits and customs of the people,

28 *Ibid.*, pp 198-201, J C Fenton, *Saint Matthew* London 1971, p 227

29 Jeremias, *op.cit.*, pp 200-201 Although 'joy' is expressed only in the case of the one who found the treasure (13 44), it equally applies to the other since he has found "a pearl of great value" (13 46)

30 Jeremias, *op cit.*, pp 225-226.

their occupations ... Nature in her marvellous variety formed the warp and the woof of his preaching and teaching, especially his parables. The "sacramental sensitivity" with which he adorns all creatures must arouse in us an ecological response which should lead us to regard all creation as partner in our dialogue with God, and urge us on to have an environmental responsibility which would make us staunch defenders of the global eco-system, of all things, living and non-living, against the impending ecological hazards.

The above reflections on the parables from an ecological point of view must also lead us to an examination of some of *Jesus' miracles* from the same view point since the miracles of Jesus (thirty-seven of them in the Synoptic Gospels and seven in John), form a major section of the Gospels, and since Jesus himself reveals his identity and the presence of the Reign of God through them (cf. Lk 4 18-19, 7:18-23).

Restoring the balance

Since in Mk a series of four miracles (in 4:35-5:43) follows immediately the series of parables (in 4:1-34), we shall limit our study to these *miracles as reported in Mk* and draw relevant conclusions for an ecological consciousness and responsibility. All the four miracles narrated here reveal the power of God over the forces of nature (4:35-41), demonic possession (5·1-20), disease (5:25-34) and death (5 21-24 35-43). Each of them portrays in its own way God's "dominion" and shepherding care over creation and affirms that God is the first ecologist who cares for the wholeness of his creatures and promotes healthy eco-friendliness and eco-solidarity

In the Near Eastern mythologies the sea was considered as a symbol of the powers of evil and chaos. Even the Hebrews considered the sea as the abode of God's enemies, Rahab, Leviathan, the dragon, the sea monster, etc. (cf. Ps 74:13-14, 89:9-10; Is 51:9-10; Job 26:12, etc.). God alone had power over the raging sea. He only could still the ravaging storm and the roaring waves (cf. Job 7:12, Ps 65:7; 89:9, 107:23-29).[31]

It is symbolic that in *the first miracle* (4:35-41) while the boat is tossed about by the raging waves, Jesus is blissfully asleep on

31. V. TAYLOR, *The Gospel according to St Mark* London: Macmillan, 1966, pp. 272-273, thinks that it is unconvincing that Near Eastern mythologies are behind this incident. But cf D.E. NINEHAM, *Saint Mark*. London· 1969, pp. 146-147, VIVIANO, *op.cit.*, p. 688.

the cushion (4:38); while the fishermen, experienced in their profession, tremble with fear, Jesus remains sleeping cool and unperturbed. No hostility (the waves) and no diffidence and doubt (cf. the disciples as portrayed in 4 38) can shake the confidence of Jesus in YHWH who can still the storms and control the waves (cf. Ps 74·13-14, 89·9-10; 107·28-29) With the power that he shares with his Father Jesus admonishes the storm to be quiet. At his words, "Peace; be still" (4·39), the winds cease, the storm subsides and calm returns, for, "the sea is His, for He made it" (Ps 95 5)

In the midst of environmental disasters and ecological catastrophes which are taking place unabatedly, this incident about the *calming of the sea* calls for a strong faith in Jesus who is both the creator as well as the sustainer, with God, of all creation, and who at the same time is also the eschatological agent of God

In situations when natural calamities strike and wipe away thousands of humans as well as animals, birds, plants and trees (as it happened in the earthquake in Maharashtra and Karnataka in 1993) or when human greed and avarice coupled with political ambitions, in the name of economic progress, submerge thousands of acres of arable land and virgin forests, the habitat of birds, wild animals and rare plants and displace innumerable tribal families depriving them of their natural sustenance (as in the case of Sardar Sarovar Project in the Western states of India), it is hardly possible to have trust in God! It seems "as if God himself had lost interest in his people, he had ceased to watch over them "[32] It is at moments like these we should enkindle our confidence in God and cry out, "Lord, do you not care if we perish?" (4 38), "Bestir thyself and awake for our rights" (Ps 35 23), "Rouse thyself, come to our help" (Ps 59 4), "Rise up, hasten to our aid" (Ps 44 26), etc Armed with the power of God, Jesus will surely come to the rescue of his creation in the face of the forces of destruction This miracle also demands from us unstinted efforts to ward off the eco-disasters and destructions which are taking place around us

In the case of Jesus *walking on the sea* (Mk 6 45 52) with Peter in Mt (14:22-33), once again it is the power of God over the hostile foes that receives emphasis Displaying the genre of sea-rescue epiphanies, this incident too has an ecological resonance

32. NINEHAM, *op.cit.*, pp 146-147

When engulfed on all sides by the pollution of air, land and seas, we need not be afraid and lose heart. The helplessness and despair that we experience at these moments, far from discouraging us in our attempts to bring about the healing of nature, should spur us on to commit ourselves firmly to champion its cause. "The saving power of God can turn despair into hopeful efforts toward dealing with environmental crisis."[33]

As in the stilling of the storm (and in the walking on the waters), so too in *the exorcism of the demon* (Mk 5:1-20), Jesus exhibits his overwhelming power over Satan. As the previous incident closes with the words, "they were filled with awe" (4:41), so too Mk brings to conclusion this latter story with the words, "all marvelled" (5:20). Not too much importance need be given to the story of the swines which occupies barely three sentences (5:11-13) in the whole story.[34] Only here and in the incident about the cursing of the fig tree (Mk 11:12-14.20-21) is Jesus shown as using his power for destructive purpose We may find this story of little interest to our theme.

In any case, one thing is certain for the ecological understanding of this passage. The blessings of the Reign of God are extended to every domain in the created order The immensity of the power of Jesus is all-pervasive — over nature and over super-nature, over the waters of the sea and over the unclean spirits Jesus is the extraordinary power of God in action, set in motion to subdue the evil forces that conspire against the peaceful cosmic harmony between nature and human beings and between humans and the world of spirits!

The last section of this chapter (Mk 5) deals with two *healing incidents* arranged in the so-called "sandwich" device, vv 21-24 and 35-43 treating about the healing of Jairus' daughter and vv 25-34, which come in the middle, reporting about the healing of the woman with the flow of blood.[35] The pairing of the two incidents, one about a man asking for healing for his daughter,[36]

---

33 Hill, *op cit*, p 140

34. Nineham, *op.cit.*, pp 150-152. Being a later addition to the story of the exorcism, the drowning of the swine may denote the cleansing of the Gentile territory and preparing it to receive the good news. Note that pigs were considered unclean animals by the Jews This is confirmed by the fact that Jesus himself now commissions the exorcised man to proclaim "how much the Lord has done " (5 18-20)

35 Harrington, *op.cit*, p 607, Nineham, *op cit.*, p. 157

36. While the other evangelists say that the girl was already dead (Mt 9:18, Lk 8:42), Mk mentions that she is only at the point of death (5.23)

and the other about a woman seeking for wholeness for herself, may not be without a purpose, namely, the equality and complementarity of female and male as the God of creation intended them at the beginning (Gen 1.26-27; cf. also note 25).

The situation in both cases is the same. In the case of Jairus' daughter, "she is at the point of death" (5:23) and "beyond the help of any earthly power"; in the case of the woman, "she had suffered much under many physicians" (5:26) and thus "had exhausted all earthly possibilities of healing."[37] When earthly possibilities, human efforts and strivings have proved to be of no avail, the remedy can come only from God, the universal healer of all ruptured realities. In both, faith in Jesus, the vehicle of God's power for healing, is proved to the hilt. The woman says, "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well" (5:28; cf also 5 34), in the case of Jairus, Jesus tells him, "Do not fear, only believe" (5:36). Cf also the words of Jairus, "My daughter is at the point of death, come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live" (5 23) — words of trusting faith.

Faith in Jesus the Lord of life and death brings about life and salvation.[38] Both the woman and Jairus recognize and acknowledge in Jesus "the saving power of God active in the world."[39] As a consequence the power of God in Jesus brings about healing (5 29) and wholeness (5:42) instantaneously. Jesus presents himself as one in full control of the whole situation. In the midst of hopelessness he brings about restoration and hope, in the midst of despair he offers joy and fulfilment!

Thus miracles in general, apart from their traditional apologetic character as proofs or confirmations of the good news of Jesus, have a revelatory function. The ministry of Jesus revolved around the Reign of God which involved the overthrow of the reign of Satan. Through the miracles Jesus destroys the "domination" of Satan over the created realities (nature as well as humans), and establishes the "dominion" of God which is liberating. In this sense all the miracles have overtones of ecological resonances.

The *nature miracles* (Mk 4 35-41, 6·45-62, etc.) invite us to trust in the absolute power of God in the midst of ecological

37 NINEHAM, op cit., p 158

38 Notice that the Greek term "sesoken" in 5 23 and 5:28 can be translated as "has healed" or "has saved." HARRINGTON, op cit., p 608.

39 NINEHAM, op cit., p 158

disasters. The *feeding miracles* (Mk 6:30-44; 8:1-10) tell us about the abundant resources of nature which provide us with food and drink and which need to be evenly distributed according to the needs of the people. The miracles of *exorcism* (4:35-41, etc.) reveal that a cosmic ecological harmony is on the agenda of God who routs the forces of ecocide. The *healing miracles* (Mk 5:25-34, etc.) call us to be God's stewards in the restoration of the disfigured images of God in creation, especially, human beings. The *resuscitation miracles* (Mk 5:21-24. 35-43, etc.) challenge us not to be silent spectators of the worldwide ecological holocaust that is taking place, but be active agents in the creation of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1-4).

Conclusion

A serious reflection on the life-events of Jesus Christ, his teaching and his miracles from an ecological point of view has been long overdue. In the context of impending eco-disasters we shall see in Jesus a champion of restoration, re-creation, reformation and transformation of the universe. *In him* we are invited to have a new look at creatures; *with him* we are called to commit ourselves to their defence; *through him* we are empowered to work for their growth and welfare; *for him* we are challenged to accept their sacredness, "since he partakes of the same nature" (Heb 2:14).

We must develop in ourselves a sensitivity and a spirituality after Jesus' own, which we may call eco-friendly. It is a spirituality which should not be merely involved in "saving" the universe from the fast-approaching "matricide," but also committed to the "raising up" of Mother Earth with all her awe-inspiring resources to the primal dignity it enjoyed at the beginning when God said "it was good" (Gen 1:4.10, etc).[40]

The Jesus of the Gospels must become for us not merely an ecologist but an ecological prophet who leads us to "a global awakening of consciousness which will generate and guarantee a rational loyalty to our planet as a whole and to its infinite variety of life species and material things in particular."[41] ☐

40 HILL, *op.cit*, p. 145.

41 RAJA, "Eco-spirituality," *VJTR* 53(1989), pp 637-638

VJTR 58(1994) 284-291

Sermons, Stories and Sacramental Imagination

Fr Denis G. PEREIRA

Fr Pereira, a priest in Bombay for thirty-four years, shares with our readers his thoughts on the use of stories and a right imagination in sermons. In doing so he also shows the purpose and qualities of a good sermon.

The surest way of killing interest in our homily from the start and of getting the congregation to "switch off" is to begin our homily with "My dear brethren, the Gospel of today tells us . . ." For, usually the homilist goes on to repeat in his own often inelegant language what the faithful have just heard and already know. And if, perchance, this is the stock introduction employed by our homilist, then the very sight of him approaching the lectern or the pulpit is sufficient cue for the people to turn off their inner lights and retire into daydreams or more pleasant fantasies. In the meantime our hapless homilist is faced with polite heads turned up to look at him with vacant staring eyes, which he ironically mistakes for rapture, though in fact they much resemble a row of coconuts on a shop stand.

A sermon or homily, if it is not to have a soporific effect on the listener, should, by the same token, not be a foray into baffling biblical exegesis, nor an *excursus* into abstruse dogmatic theologising. Rather, at the end of the sermon/homily the listeners should be saying, with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" (Lk 24:32). Quite simply, the preacher is expected to accompany his people on their "way," walk with them, empathize with them as they encounter problems on *their* "way", speaking their language and giving them a joyful hope in living as he opens the Scriptures to them. At the end of the sermon/homily they must be

able to say that the Scriptures have had a relevance in meeting the questions which life (the "way" they are traversing here and now) puts to them.

Is this possible? Can the priest reach out to this heterogeneous "bunch of coconuts" (no slur intended!) and strike a chord in their hearts, preoccupied with concerns which are as different as there are heads present? How can he make these hearts burn? Not by cold reasoning, no matter how clever; not by brilliance of speech, no matter how sparkling; not by the importance of the subject, no matter how pertinent — but by appealing to their imagination!

Francois Mauriac, when asked what he expected from the priest, said. "I do not want him to preach, because by the time he has reached the third phrase of his sermon I have already begun to disagree with him." Reasoning, arguments, wealth of quotations and all the baggage of learning, often seem to provoke hostility or opposition But there is fortunately another tool available — imagination Napoleon Bonaparte is reported to have said, "Men are moved by their imagination," and acting on this he enthused his soldiers to perform deeds of superhuman valor, and spurred them on to incredible sacrifices, commitment and loyalty by setting out grandiose goals which stirred their imagination and empowered their lives

Have we paused to investigate why our people are drawn to "lively Masses," will listen attentively, and for long stretches, to sermons preached by popular preachers of novenas, at healing services, at para-liturgies, or at prayer-meeting — whereas even a five-minute homily in the best enlightened liturgical style is more than they can tolerate? Perhaps the former meet the demands of their religious imagination (you may call them "their needs"), while the latter does not! How often, on the other hand, have not some of us priests been told, "I like your sermons — they are so practical," meaning that they have touched their lives, striking the chords of their imagination of a religion that works.

Stories from the Pulpit

Many priests tell stories in the pulpit. Often these stories are picked out from some book or magazine (usually foreign in origin — to impress?): "I once read in the *Readers' Digest* .. " or "It so happened in New York that ...." It could happen that the priest only succeeds in acquiring the reputation of being a good

entertainer, not a genuine storyteller such as Jesus was. A genuine religious storyteller must warm the heart and stir the conscience of the listener, enthusing him to meet the daunting challenge of saying to himself "Alas, I have not been acting correctly. I must change my way of living." The end-result of a successful story told from the pulpit should be, "Go and do likewise" — or otherwise!

A story is a powerful tool in the hands both of the preacher and of the listener to achieve a change of heart. Stories are part of the symbolic world whose task is to make our lives work, and to help us to live together as a group. Stories and myths, images and symbols, must serve to interpret human experience, to make the past (as in the case of myths) active in the present, and to empower persons to effect significant changes in their lives. As Andrew Greeley puts it, "the ethics of the creative imagination are far more powerful than the ethics of the intellect," no matter how appropriate and necessary the latter undeniably are, reflectively and analytically.

Images have a power to move us and to transform our lives. A single image is worth more than a thousand words. To give an example. There was a prisoner who kept boasting that he had fathered three children by three different women. The prison chaplain could find no words, no argument that would get him to repent or even want to change his life. But one day the chaplain was surprised to see this hardened man come up to him, weeping. He had seen a poster put up on the notice board in the Chapel. It had a picture of a little child in a garden, running towards the camera. It had as slogan a simple message. "All my tomorrows depend upon your love." Seeing it the prisoner was moved to say to the Chaplain. "Sir, my children have no father." And, he wept!

Two Types of Imagination

There are two types of religious imagination — "supernaturalistic imagination" and "sacramental imagination." In the first, we carry the image of a Supreme Being with whom we enter into relationships similar-to-human, only more exalted. Thus, "God loves me" is similar to "Phyllis or Pushpa loves me," only more perfectly. Here God is a supreme, invisible Being; faith is believing in someone unseen, and prayer means speaking to someone invisible, who is sometimes 'experienced' as 'walking by my side' (which risks being self-talk, or a monologue, and in

secular contexts nowadays can be taken as evidence of insanity). Another danger of such supernaturalistic talk is that we come to expect, literally, this Other all-powerful, all-good Person to intervene on our behalf, and since He obviously doesn't, He quite naturally gets relegated to the unenviable status of "the man upstairs" who can only be contacted through mediators, such as angels, prophets, Jesus.

Sacramental imagination, on the other hand, communicates a feeling for the sacred. It begins with the bias of a universal divine presence. The world becomes an encounter with God, just as a sacrament is an "encounter with Christ" (Schillebeeckx). The question here is not how to make a missing God present (as in supernaturalistic imagination) but rather how does the all-present, ubiquitous God enter into my mind and heart. As Fr John Shea (in *Stories of Faith*) puts it: "Faith is not believing in something that cannot be seen, but in responding in mind and heart to what cannot be escaped."

Jesus, it has been said, was the "sacrament of God" (Schillebeeckx). The Greek Fathers call him the *ikon* of the Father. How so? Again, John Shea expresses it beautifully, picturesquely:

> When Jesus was with people, the God who was previously dormant was awake and active. When Jesus moved out of their lives, God quieted down. When Jesus returned, God stirred ... (People began to realise that) Jesus must have a special relationship to God because when we are with him we have a special relationship to God.

Through sacramental imagination the earth, people, events, even so-called evil, can bring us face to face with God.

Stories in the Sermon

Let's come back to our sermons and stories. Very often we tell stories in our sermons to hold the attention or to sustain interest. Not a bad idea, really, but these could easily be just gimmicks, and our storytelling can degenerate into public entertainment (as on TV). I once concelebrated the Eucharist with a young priest in Canada. His homily was to be based on the Gospel story of the guests invited to the wedding and the one who came without a wedding garment. Our homelist had brought into the sanctuary, as a prop, a coat rack with various types of coats on it. As he progressed in his homily he went through the motions of putting on and shedding the various types of coats

used on various occasions. He wanted to make the point that we must wear the mantle of holiness when we come before God. What he succeeded in provoking successively were feelings such as curiosity ("what's he up to"), irritation ("does he take us to be a bunch of imbeciles?"), *ennui* ("will someone please stop him"), helplessness ("we have got to sit through this for only a few more minutes now") — but *no* feelings of the sacred, of faith, of God's presence A story, or a symbol, used in a sermon must pose a challenge to our faith, nurture it, or gear it up for action When St Paul, for example, calls Christians 'saints' he is inviting and encouraging them to make their lives sacraments of the supreme goodness of God In like manner, to take a sacramental symbol, the incensing of the Book of the Gospels (a gestural symbol or image) is a concrete expression of the reverence due to the Gospels as the Word of God, and an invitation to the beholder to do likewise

Our stories, too, must be such that they bring the listener to experience the sacred, to touch God, so to say These stories must provoke the same reaction in the listener as that of the blind girl who, on being cured, and seeing colours, exclaimed "My God!" She saw a colour but experienced God, in the same way that Thomas touched the humanity of Christ and professed his divinity "My Lord and my God!" When through our stories we touch the sacramental imagination of the listeners, then we communicate a sense of the sacred and cause them to 'touch' the all-present, though until then dormant, God Ultimately, our religious story-telling must be such that it generates faith, i.e , it helps the listener to make his life work by giving him self-understanding through identifying with the symbol of his life reflected in the story told.

What are the stories that generate faith? In the first place, we have stories of "coming to faith," where the *initiative* of God is stressed Then, we have stories where the *reality* of God is recognised and acknowledged Next, we have stories in which we perceive how the reality of God is expressed and conveyed in *images* such as friend, shepherd, lover, king, teacher, or in mystic symbolisation Finally, stories which portray responses to our life-experiences, such as joy, sorrow, disappointment, healing, etc. These responses are themselves *experiences of grace*. This last needs explanation

An experience of grace is an experience that reinforces the human propensity to hope We all experience life as finite. We

feel hemmed in on all sides by our physiological, biological, psychological and sociological limitations. We may hunger for the infinite, but we experience our life, our daily life, as all too painfully fragile and finite. And then, sometimes, within this experience of our limitedness we (or some of us) get a hint, sometimes subtle, at other times powerful, that there is "something else" beyond the horizon. We are stirred to wonder! For we sense not only that life is limited, but that our very existence is gifted. And if existence is gratuitous then it may also be gracious. This relation of the specialness of the ordinary oftentimes explodes in religious symbols and stories, which put us mysteriously (because they arise from our preconscious, defying rational analyses) in touch with the sacred, the "something else" or "Someone Else" The Gospels are full of such stories, stories of limit-experiences or, if you wish, experiences of grace, e.g., stories of cures, conversions, visions, encounters, forgiveness, invitation to table-fellowship and, the greatest of them all, the surpassing story of the Resurrection and the risen life of Jesus (of which that of the Christian and of the Church is a sharing and a consequence)

When we recount these Gospel stories, or similar experiences of grace, whether in seemingly secular or in religious contexts, we must do so in such a way that the sacramental dimension of the experience becomes real to the listeners in their place, time and circumstances. The story must be told in such a way that it enables the listeners to link their life-story with it, and further to be led to integrate their life-story with the great cosmic story of God's love and grace to all of struggling humankind

By Way of Example

The following may serve as one attempt, albeit halting and imperfect, of how a Gospel story may be related to the modern listener, using modern-day symbols to evoke the listener's sacramental imagination It refers to the Gospel passage from Lk 19.1-10.

> The story of Jesus and the tax-collector Zacchaeus is a story of compassion in action In Jesus we find no solemn-faced confessor, nor hair-shirt wearing preacher calling an awful sinner to repentance Rather here is One offering understanding, sympathy and acceptance through the warmth of a simple of gesture of friendship "Zacchaeus, come down, I want to have dinner with you " The guest becomes the host, inviting the host to be His guest The

paradox and the humour of the situation should not escape us. God does not laugh at our weakness; rather, he smiles at our embarrassment as we struggle to believe that he can be our Friend, *despite who we have been*

Who would think that Jesus would be foolish enough to brave the censure of the Pharisees in order to share at the table of Zacchaeus and of our own foolish lives? But he does so! Which means that he believes in us more than we dare believe in ourselves . And that is why the unexpected happens Zacchaeus did the unthinkable, the unbelievable for one in his life-situation "Look, sir," he said, "I'm going to give back my ill-gotten gains and more — fourfold! And from what I've legitimately earned I'll give half to the poor" Love begets love And compassion spawns generosity and concern for the less fortunate

Ah, yes, Jesus told so many stories that he ended up becoming one Himself — a story not in the sense of something untrue, but as something too good to be forgotten, something to remember and to recount And we too, dear friends, when we tell our children and others the story of the compassion of Jesus to us, tell of the mercy and kindness of God to us, then we might become a legend ourselves as people recount our own compassion to them, and as how *we* became *Jesus to them* Amen

Conclusion: The Use of Story in the Sermon

By way of conclusion, and with a view to being "practical" (not always the best thing if one accepts that people are moved by imagination), I offer the following suggestions

1 Stories told just to entertain, to capture the attention, or to be funny, detract from the main purpose of the sermon/homily, viz., to bring the hearer in touch with the sacred

2 Stories built around supernaturalistic imagination are often counterproductive Most often these arise from a fundamentalistic interpretation of the Bible. Such interpretation, in fact, closes the Bible as a book because it brings a rather 'small-town mentality' to bear on the grand design of the inspired writers In a sense, the Bible should be read with the imagination, albeit sacramental, in much the same way as we would read a creative work of art or poetry

3 Stories should excite the sacramental imagination of the listener They should bring the listener to experience the sacred, to touch the God who is present in our very earthly existence, in our experience of finitude.

4 Such 'stories of faith' must highlight for the listener: (a) the initiative of God (so evident in the Biblical narrative stories and

in the prophetic writings); (b) the reality of God, camouflaged, so to speak, in the ordinary events of life, our daily life-experiences, (c) the way in which we perceive the reality of God as it relates to us. (As someone has said. "God meets us according to our needs. To the lonely he comes as Friend, to the sinner he comes as Saviour, to the fighter for justice he comes as Leader.")

5 Stories must reinforce hope and the assurance of salvation. As Greeley points out "The greater a person's propensity to hope and his need to hope and his capacity to experience renewals of hope, the more likely that person is to be in some sense of the word 'religious' " Simply put, stories of faith must be bearers of grace, harbingers of hope and the meaning of life.

6 We need not always look for narrative stories. A homely image (the Lord is my Shepherd), an analogy, an illustration or a symbol can serve the same purpose.

7 Our stories must be such that they touch our own hearts before they can touch those of our listeners Here is one more instance where the most particular has the widest application or appeal Indeed, our stories will not touch the imagination of our listeners if they are not perceived as flowing from our own conviction about them In other words, we must have lived our stories, or at least must show that we are ourselves open to live by them

"The ethics of the creative imagination are far more powerful than the ethics of the intellect " The sermon that uses stories or symbols which excite sacramental imagination has a power to change lives beyond our wildest imaginings

Now,
there was only the morning
and the dancing man of the broken tomb
the story says
he dances still

That is why
down to this day
we lean over the beds of our babies
and in the seconds before sleep
tell the story of the undying dancing man
so the dream of Jesus will carry them to dawn

(Fr John Shea, in *The Storyteller of God*)

VJTR 58 (1994) 293-297

Easter and the Dalits

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

Rev. Moses Paul Peter PENUMAKA*

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" is the question two messengers in dazzling clothes asked the women who visited Jesus' tomb on the first Easter morning The messengers told the women, "Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise" (Lk 24·5ff). Jesus is risen from the dead. The impossible has become possible We can no longer fear death, but pray in affirmation and assurance, *mrtyor ma amrtam gamaya* The universal truth and fact that all living beings are mortal and decay, has now become untrue and unreal. The crucified Jesus who died and was buried on Friday afternoon is alive on Sunday morning. This incredible fact is what makes Easter the most significant basis for the history, faith and theology of the Church.

Easter is the most prepared, significant and awaited celebration in the Church's calendar We have a long period of forty days beginning with Ash Wednesday We meditate on the passion and sufferings of Jesus during the lenten season so much that we unfortunately forget the significance of Easter The climax of Lent ends with a long three hour service of "highly sentimentalised versions of the gruesome details of his suffering and crucifixion " The significance and the faith expression of the Easter event is often summed up in an one-hour service on Easter Sunday But Easter is the celebration of God's promise of eternal life It is the celebration of hope and the victory of the afflicted It is God's vindication of the victims of oppressive structures It is God's definitive intervention in the history of the world

The cross and resurrection event "has a corporate signifi-

*The author is a Lecturer in Christian Theology at the Leonard Theological College P O Box 36 Jabalpur 482 001

cance both as an act on the part of Jesus, and as an interpreted event in the life of the believing community."[1] Stanley J. Samartha emphasises three important elements in the New Testament with regard to the cross-resurrection event which we should note. First, that it was only after the resurrection event that the disciples looked at the cross and were empowered to proclaim Jesus as Lord. We have to note the close relationship between cross and resurrection. "In the understanding of the believing community, the cross points to the resurrection and the resurrection illumines and vindicates the cross." Secondly, the lenten meditations have a tendency to make the cross and resurrection as the climax of Jesus' story The totality of Jesus' life, work, deeds, teachings, death and resurrection must be seen, and the isolation of the cross and resurrection must be avoided. Thirdly, we should acknowledge that it was God who was active in the life, work, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[2] "The Jesus you crucified and killed," (Acts 2 23) "God raised up, and of that we are witnesses" (Acts 2:32) These elements must be noted as they point to the profound meaning of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, which occupies a central place for the faith and the worship of the church

Do not seek the living among the dead

A close look at the New Testament reports of the cross and resurrection with their affirmations and discrepancies shows two things clearly. First the risen Christ appeared to individuals and groups. Secondly, one or more women independently of these appearances discovered his tomb to be empty on the third day.[3] But unlike the case of the crucifixion, there were no eye-witnesses to the resurrection. What happened cannot be described in empirical language. Hans-Ruedi Weber points out that the women were invited to come and see, but what they saw was not a resuscitated corpse but the place where he had lain, the empty tomb. This does not mean that the resurrection did not actually happen, or that it happened only in the minds and perception of the first Christians, as some claim. Rather, one

[1]S.J Samartha, *One Christ — Many Religions Towards a Revised Cristology* Bangalore Sathri, 1992, p 156

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 157.

[3]Gerald O'Collins, S.J. *The Easter Jesus* London. Longman & Todd, 1973, p 133

might say: "The crucifixion of Jesus was an event within history and *of* history (it could have been filmed). The resurrection was an event within history and *of the end* of history." The resurrection was an event of God's Kingdom breaking into our time, a truly apocalyptic event.[4] It was God's vindication of Jesus, the son of man who was crucified and buried, whom "God raised up."

The cross-resurrection event sharpens the distinction between the living God and our false divinities. The birth, life, works, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus reveal the God of life — the living God. The God of Sarah and of Abraham. The God of Dalits and Tribals. The God of the slaves and the poor who are oppressed, alienated, exploited and dehumanised. Jon Sobrino says that the early Christians stated the reality of the true God very well, from the positive standpoint *gloria Dei, vivens homo* ("the glory of God — a living human being"). The deep correlation between "God" and "life" is what makes it possible to progress in the knowledge of the living God and in the unmasking of false divinities. "The God in whose name life is engendered will be the true divinity, and the worship of the true God will progress in the process of engendering life. Conversely, the gods in whose name death is produced will be false divinities, and there will be an increasing lapse into idolatry as death proliferates."[5] The present world structure which spells death for the masses has unfortunately become idolised in the hearts of people. *Idolatry* — the worship of the false gods of the systems of oppression — is found in what people are searching as the meaning of life. All systems of oppression are characterised by the creation of gods and idols that support oppression and anti-life forces and death. The cross-resurrection of Jesus, revealing the God of life, warns us not to seek the living among the dead.

Son of Man — the crucified-and-risen One

The cross-resurrection of Jesus the Son of Man reveals three important points. First the crucified and risen one empowers us to banish fear and face the power of death with the conviction

---

[4] Hans-Ruedi Weber, *Power: Focus for a Biblical Theology*, Geneva: WCC, 1989, p. 157

[5] Jon Sobrino, "The Epiphany of the God of Life in Jesus of Nazareth" in Pablo Richard et al. *The Idols of Death and the God of Life: A Theology*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1980, p. 67

of a future resurrection. George V Pixley says that Jesus, the Son of Man, the model of the poor and just who suffer in their own flesh the criminal attitude of the powerful, is at the same time the Son of God who pays with his blood for his solidarity with the poor. However the Gospels do not glorify his death: Jesus did not live to die, but rather died to defend the right of life. Thus it happens that the saviour God — the God of the Exodus — carries out his own judgement on Jesus, condemned by the priests and Roman authorities — that is, by the rich and powerful. This new judgement has Jesus' resurrection as its conclusion with chosen witnesses who were to be the apostles of this Messiah of the poor, executed for demanding justice for his brothers and sisters [6] Hence the cross and resurrection of Jesus, Son of Man, empowers us to demand and defend the right of life, to demand and defend justice and to demand and defend human dignity without fear

Second, the Son of man is crucified with the dalits and it is dalits who are the witnesses of the resurrection. James Cone is right in pointing out that Jesus was not crucified on an altar between the beautiful candle stands but on the cross between two thieves [7] Jesus is not in our peaceful, quiet cathedrals, but in the pallis, purs, nukkads, bazars and bastis, fighting against the oppression of dalits, tribals and women Hence we see in the Gospels that at both the cross and resurrection event the women are present Lloyd Geering in *Resurrection A Symbol of Hope* offers remarks about the key persons in the empty tomb's story (Mk 15 40-16 8a) Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome appear nowhere else in the Gospel He expresses surprise that those persons are never heard of again, they find no mention in the early chapters of Acts, which is our only picture of the primitive church. He concludes that one would expect those who have discovered the empty tomb to have played a prominent part in the primitive church.[8] The key persons in the empty tomb story are none other than the alienated dalits — the dalits of dalits — the women, who do not and could not play a prominent part in the early church. But God chooses those dalits to be witnesses of God's

[6] George V Pixley, "Divine Judgement in History" in *ibid*, p. 54.

[7] James Cone, "The White Church and Black Power" in Gayrand S Wilmore & James Cone (eds.), *Black Theology A Documentary History 1966-1976* Maryknoll. Orbis Books, 1979, p. 115

[8] As quoted by O'Collins, *op cit*, p 98

Kingdom breaking through our time in the resurrection event.

Third, in the cross and resurrection event it is clear that it is God and the dalits who pronounce the final judgement on the authorities of this world. The central point of the New Testament profession of faith is that this poor man, the Son of Man, whom the powerful of those times declared worthy to die, has been declared the just one by God, and that through his resurrection he has been appointed judge of the very ones who condemned him. "This is God's archetypal historical judgement in the Christian texts of the Bible, the martyred representative of the people has the last word in history "[9] In the person of the resurrected Jesus, God and the *ochlos* pronounce the final judgement on the authorities of this world, who would even murder the dalits (*ochlos*) in order to continue in their positions of power.

In concluding I would like to recall what Samartha says, that there are millions of men and women, children, and political prisoners, who are victims of unjust and evil systems, who have no hope of release in their life time The cross can stand without resurrection, but the resurrection in itself has little meaning without the cross "Every resurrection has a cross behind it, but not every cross has a resurrection ahead of it "[10] However, we should remember that the poor, oppressed and alienated dalits are only just beginning to voice out their claims With all their failings, defeats, despairs, we have a premonition that the "joys, the strengths and the mysterious weakness of God will continue taking shape in the faith, hope, and love of the poor And in any event, we know that God is close by, and that the danger is not unbelieving worldliness, but apathetic resignation and indifference toward our brothers and sisters "[11] The hopeless cries of agony on the cross, and the shouts of joy of Jesus' resurrection must sound like a shout and a demand in the ears of the oppressors, the satisfied, and the indifferent Let us reflect on the poem of Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga of Brazil, "These Raucous Roosters Answer You"[12]

> You ask me about my faith
> Shall I answer you by asking impertinently? .
> The living God of these poor people,

[9] Pixley, *op cit* p 54

[10] Samartha, *Our Christ — Many Religions*, p 159

[11] Javier Jimenez Limon, "Meditation on the God of the Poor" in Richard et al , *op.cit.*, p. 157

[12] As quoted by Limon, p 158

is he ours, oh Teofilo?

These roosters that persist, into the night, shrill clarion calls, piercing the darkness, challenging the stars and the stock markets; rigid sentinels, braced against sleep, as often as is needed; these roosters born and alive and always on duty so that nobody will sleep, foreign to the testimony, if he did not previously make his alliance with the night and with the dawn.

These roosters (that crow to us) are the roosters of the guilt of Saint Peter

Theses roosters (that call to us) are the roosters of Mary's vigil.

These roosters (that sing to us) are the roosters of the sepulcher,

mane prima sabbati!

Information

PLANNING HIGHER STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, ETHICS, SPIRITUALITY?

You can do Ph D, M Phil or M.A at Madras University

The Department of Christian Studies at Madras University admits qualified students to Ph.D and M Phil programmes in Christian Studies A comprehensive two-year M A programme will begin in July 1994 The emphasis of the Department is on serious and contextually relevant research and study

The eligibility requirements are those of Madras University, with the following specifications

For Ph.D./M.Phil..

1 One of the following post-graduate degrees. Master's Degree in Christian Theology or Philosophy (M Th., M.Ph., Licentiate from Pontifical Universities or Affiliated Institutes); M A in Christianity; Master's Degree in Indian Religions, M.A. in Philosophy, Psychology, Androgogy, Sociology or Anthropology

2. Candidates holding a Master's Degree in subjects other than Christian Philosophy or Theology or M.A in Christianity, should have an undergraduate degree in Christian Theology or Philosophy (B Ph. or B.Th.)

For M.A.:

Preference will be given to candidates whose undergraduate degree is in a related field, such as, B.Ph., B.Th., B A. in Christianity, B.A. in Indian Religions or B.A. in Philosophy

For further information, please contact:

Head
Department of Christian Studies
University Madras
Madras 600 005.
Phone: (044) 568778; Ext. 345

VJTR 58(1994) 298-307

Inculturation and Evangelization

Biblical Foundations for Inculturation

Fr Justin S. UPKONG

The African Synod has placed the African Church with its concern for inculturation in the foreground of the universal Church's consciousness. Fr Upkong, who teaches in the Catholic Institute of West Africa (P O Box 499, Port Harcourt, Nigeria), probes into the Bible to discover the significance and necessity of inculturation. After defining the terms he shows that both the OT and the NT present God's message according to concrete and particular cultures, and that even the face of Jesus acquires diverse aspects in the four Gospels according to cultural conditionings. This process must continue in the work of evangelization.

Inculturation has become an important theological symbol of our age. Though it originated in the context of the Third World, it is also significant for the First World.[1] Our concern in this paper shall be to examine the interrelationship between inculturation and evangelization from the biblical perspective, and thus show how the practice of inculturation is grounded in the Bible. Our point of departure is that both in the Old and the New Testaments, God's message of salvation is not communicated to human beings in a vague general way but in concrete human situations and through the resources of the culture of the people to whom it is given. Inculturation is rooted in this consciousness that God relates to peoples within the context of their life situation and culture.

1 The Catholic Theological Society of America in its 1990 Annual Convention had for its theme "Inculturation and Catholicity." See "News from the Societies" in *Bulletin of the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion* 19 (April 1990), p 46. Lesslie Newbigin can be said to be the chief protagonist of the inculturation of the Gospel in the West. See his book *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, Geneva: WCC Mission Series, 1986, especially pp 1-2. The whole book is devoted to a discussion on inculturation in the First World.

Meaning of Inculturation

There is as yet no standard definition of inculturation. This is partly because, as Ary Crollius points out, the concept is new and still developing,[2] and partly because of the elasticity of the concept of culture on which it is based. We shall offer here a working definition.

Inculturation may be viewed as a model (that is as an objective reality, with the focus on *what* it looks like), or as a method (that is, as a process, in this case an interpretative process, with the focus on *how* the reality comes to be). Most current definitions of inculturation view it as a model.[3] We prefer, however, to view it as a method since it has to do with approach in evangelization.

Viewed as a method, inculturation may be defined as the process of interpreting and living Christianity (that is, the Christian faith and practice) from within the perspective of a particular culture and of its people's social and historical life-experience in such a way that Christian values are made to animate the people's way of life.

Inculturation involves a mutual interaction and influence between a culture and Christianity whereby the culture is transformed in the process and Christianity is reinterpreted in the light of a new culture and a historical life-experience.[4] Three things characterize this process. The first is the utilization of the resources of the culture in question for interpreting and articulating the Christian faith. The second is that the Good News of Jesus is made to challenge the culture. The third is that all this is done from within the perspective of the culture and through the agency of insiders in the culture.[5] From the specifically African socio-cultural point of view, inculturation as a process of interpreting Christianity involves the use of an interpretative frame of reference which sees the material/profane/secular and the

2 Ary Roest CROLLIUS, "Inculturation: Newness and Ongoing Process," in *Inculturation: Its meaning and Urgency*, ed. by J M WALLIGE *et al.*, Nairobi: St Paul's Publications, 1986, p. 31.

3. See for example, P. ARRUPE, "Letter to the Whole Society on Inculturation," May 14, 1978, cited in Peter SCHINELLER, *A Handbook on Inculturation*, New York: Paulist Press, 1990, p. 6; A. SHORTER, *Towards A Theology of Inculturation*, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988, p. 11.

4 Cf. Justin S. UKPONG, *African Theologies Now: A Profile* (Spearhead no. 80), Eldoret: Gaba Publications, 1984, p. 30.

5 "Insiders in the culture" refers to those who have experienced and understood the culture.

spiritual/sacred/religious aspects of reality as inseparable, interdependent and complementary

Meaning of Evangelization

The English verb "evangelize" comes from the Greek *euaggelizo* which means "to preach the Good News." From this we have the Greek noun *euaggelion* which means "Gospel," that is "Good News." In the Old Testament, the equivalent of *euaggelion* is the Hebrew word *besora* (plural) which means "tidings," especially tidings of victory (cf 2 Sam 18.20.25 27; 2 Kings 7·9), that is "Good News." In 2 Sam 4 10, 18 22, *besora* also has a specifically religious and eschatological connotation The verb *bissar*, as used in Psalms 40·9, 68 11, 98:2ff, and Is 41 27, 52·7, indicates the proclamation of Yahweh's victory and rule on earth to usher in a new era Rabbinic Judaism took on and developed this eschatological aspect Thus the verb *bissar* came to mean to proclaim the eschatological message of joy, and the noun *mebasser* (evangelist) the eschatological messenger of joy[6] The importance which the New Testament attaches to the noun *euaggelion* is not found in Rabbinic Judaism For this we have to turn to ancient Greek usage In the religious context, *euaggelion* was used by the Greeks in connection with oracles and the cult of the Emperor The news of the birth of a divine ruler, of his enthronement as well as his speeches, acts and decrees, were glad tidings And the proclamation of the *euaggelion* brought about a new era of salvation and joy[7]

In their use of *euaggelion* and its verb forms or the ideas expressed by these, the New Testament writers clearly had the advantage of the usage found in the Old Testament, Rabbinic Judaism and ancient Greek thought Paul gives the best systematic use of the term in the New Testament In consonance with its usage in the Old Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, Paul uses the substantive *euaggelion* as a *nomen actionis* The term describes not only the content of what is preached but also the act, process and execution of the proclamation[8] Thus in 2 Cor 8 18, *euaggelion* denotes the action of preaching the Gospel Besides, the Gospel itself is full of dynamism, for as in the Old Testa-

6. Cf. G. Friedrich, "euaggelion," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, ed. by Gerhard Kittel. Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, 1964, pp 721-726

7 Cf U Becker, "Gospel" in *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol 2, ed by Colin Brown. Exeter Paternoster Press, 1976, pp 107-109

ment concept of *besora* and the ancient Greek understanding of *euaggelion*, the Gospel of Christ effects what it signifies. Preaching the Gospel means announcing to all nations the breaking in of the divine rule on earth, and above all the "Easter Victory of Christ" (Rom 1:16). Thus proclamation stirs up faith and brings salvation (Rom 1:16, Phil 1:27), it reveals God's righteousness and the fulfilment of Israel's hope (Rom 1:17; 2:16; Col 1:5.23).

From the above, it is clear that evangelization means bringing the Good News of God's salvation to people; and inculturation means doing so from the perspective of the people's culture and life situation In what follows, we shall seek to show that the Bible presents God as communicating the Good News of salvation to people within the context of their culture and historical life situation.

The Bible as God's Word in Human Language

The popular but basic understanding of the Bible as God's Word in human language provides a good starting point for understanding the way God's message of salvation is communicated to humanity The term "language" is to be understood here in the wide sense which embraces not only words but also images, symbols. .. In addition, language carries with it the world-view of a culture, that is, a mode of perceiving and interpreting reality In other words, to express oneself in a particular language is to make use not only of the words and the symbols of that culture but also of its world-view Thus to say that the Bible is God's Word in human language is to say that the medium of communicating God's message to people is not only the words and symbols but also the world-view of the people, that God's Word is communicated to people in accordance with their mode and level of understanding This is indeed what we find in the Bible.

In the Hebrew Bible the divine message is couched in the Hebrew language with Hebrew imagery and mode of expression This is the only way the divine message of the OT could have been well understood by its original recipients. The history of the communication process in the New Testament offers a penetrating insight Jesus spoke Aramaic, but by the time the New Testament came to be written, Greek had become the more handy language for transmitting the Christian message — it

8 FRIEDRICK, "*Euaggelion*," p 110

was the language more commonly spoken by the people to whom the Gospel message was brought It is of special importance also that the New Testament was written not in classical Greek but in the more popular *Koine* Greek spoken by the common people Here we see already a realization of the need to make the message of Jesus available to people according to their level of understanding. Again the fact that language carries with it not only words but also the symbols, images and world-views particular to a culture needs stressing

God's Self-Revelation Takes Place in Human Life Contexts

If in the Bible God's message is expressed in human language, God's self-revelation and the interaction between God and human beings which we find there clearly show that God also makes God's self available to people in the concrete historical circumstances of their lives The anthropomorphisms we find in the Old Testament make sense because they express the fact of God's self-revelation and availability from the perspective of the recipients of the revelation God's self-revelation to Israel took place within the historical circumstances of these people's life The call of Abraham, for example, is not presented as a mere theoretical configuration or idea, but expressed in the concrete circumstance of Abraham's migration to Canaan And when we think of God's covenant with Israel, we cannot divorce it from such concrete cultural realities like circumcision and the Ten Commandments

The NT mystery of the incarnation comprising the totality of the Christ event shows the supreme way of God's self becoming available to human beings in the process of communicating divine salvation to them Here God's self-revelation takes place in the person of Jesus, within a particular culture and society so that in his total life and ministry Jesus was a unique example of God's interaction with human beings

Jesus and the Evangelization of the Jewish Culture

Jesus was born in a particular human group and used the language, culture and world-view, of that group in his ministry It is significant that Jesus' ministry was directed mainly to this group, the Jews (though he did give limited attention to the Gentiles) In this way he was able to evangelize the Jewish people

and culture from within, and could challenge the evil he saw in society. This, no doubt, gave much weight to his ministry and made the Good News meaningful for his followers

It is significant too, for the inculturation movement today, that in evangelizing the Jewish culture from within Jesus also preached a universal Kingdom which eventually inspired his followers to undertake a universal mission to evangelize all peoples[9]— that meant, among other things, to do this as Jesus himself did it, that is, to evangelize people from within the perspectives of their cultures One may not argue here that this was all right for the Jewish culture which already had divine revelation but not for other cultures The logical conclusion of such an argument would be that the Jewish culture should be imposed on all Christians But history shows that such a line of thinking cannot be correct the Jewish culture today does not determine the shape of Christianity We must therefore accept that Jesus left a model of approach to evangelization which was to be applied in *all* cultures, to the extent any model can be applied in particular situations And this means that the Church, which continues the mission of Jesus, must become "incarnated" in the different cultures where it finds itself by making Christianity find new expression in terms of the resources of these cultures This is God's way of communicating salvation to humanity

The Gospel Message as Good News

It is important to note that the term "gospel" (*euaggelion*) became the designation for the written accounts of the life of Jesus only in the second century CE As we have seen above, etymologically the term means "Good News." It was used originally in the early Church (New Testament) to refer to the Church's proclamation of God's salvation to humanity The content of this proclamation was Jesus whom God sent into the world and approved by miracles; whom the Jews handed over to Pilate to be killed; but whom God raised from death and made Lord and Messiah, through him God has sent his salvation to all peoples on earth.[10]

We find this basic outline of the early Church's proclamation scattered in different parts of the New Testament, particu-

9 Cf. Pheme PERKINS, *Reading the New Testament An Introduction* (2nd ed), New York. Paulist Press, 1988, pp 65-66

larly in Acts of the Apostles. It was the subject of Peter's proclamation at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-39), at the healing of the lame man at the Temple gate (Acts 3:13-26), before the Sanhedrin when the apostles were arrested (Acts 5.30-32), and to the Gentiles at Cornelius house (Acts 10:36-43). It formed also the core of Paul's kerygma before the Jews in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:17-41). In his letters to the Galatians (Gal 1.3-4, 4:6), to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 1:10), to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15.1-7), and to the Romans (Rom 1:1-4; 2 16, 8 34), Paul made use of this early Christian kerygma which he clearly identifies as a tradition handed down to him (1 Cor 15 3)

In Paul's letters, the term "gospel" is in many instances identified with Jesus the Christ In 1 Cor 1 23, for example, he talks about preaching Christ crucified as his task, and in 1 Cor 9:18 he refers to this same task as preaching the gospel In 1 Cor 1:24 he refers to Christ as the power (and the wisdom) of God for those who believe in him, both Jews and Greeks, and in Rom 1.16 the gospel is the power of God to save all who believe For Paul therefore, Jesus is the good news that is preached, thus to pervert the gospel of Christ (Gal 1 7) means to pervert Christ and the knowledge of him, and to be entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised (Gal 1 7) is to be commissioned to preach Christ to the uncircumcised For the evangelists, *euaggelion* refers to the good news about Jesus as well as the good news that Jesus proclaimed (Mk 1 11)

Today, we readily associate "gospel" with the written accounts of Jesus' life which embody the message about Jesus and the message that Jesus preached In other words, just as with Paul and the evangelists, the "gospel" is about Jesus, the first preacher of the good news, and the good news being preached by the Church today

The fact that the Church's proclamation is good news has three major implications in respect of inculturation. The first implication is that so long as this message is *good*, it seeks to be broadcast (preached), for anything good always seeks to diffuse itself (*bonum diffusivum sui*) Thus it belongs to the inner nature of the gospel message that it be preached everywhere, hence Jesus ordered his followers to go out and preach it to all nations (Mt 28.16-20) The second implication is that so long as the mes-

10. C F D Moule, *The Birth of the New Testament*, London. Adam and Charles Black, 1966, p 132

sage is *news*, it ought to be heard and understood wherever it is preached, for if it must be news to the person that listens to it, it must be heard and understood by him/her. A news broadcast in Greek does not make news to a listener who does not understand Greek. In a similar way, the Gospel message, to fulfil its meaning as *news*, must come to people in a way congenial to their mode of perception and understanding reality. Thirdly, the term "good news" connotes joy and peace. Hence for the Church's proclamation to be good news to any people it must touch their lives and concrete living conditions positively. From the point of view of the receivers of the gospel message this is particularly necessary since the gospel message is a matter of ultimate concern. What all this means is that the Church's proclamation must be made in such a way that the gospel message finds meaningful expression in the people's lives and cultures, and this is the meaning of inculturation.

The Bible is Written from a Human Point of View

It is important finally to understand that the Bible was written by human beings, and from the human, not from a heavenly point of view Its message is expressed with human cultural trappings. Thus a different world-view is found in the Old Testament from that found in the New Testament In the Old Testament God is portrayed as having direct and frequent communication with human beings, speaking to them and admonishing them The book of Genesis portrays such contact with Adam and Eve (ch 3), Cain (ch 4) and Abram (ch 12) as normal. Later such contacts were limited to the prophets In the New Testament, however, direct communication with God is expressed differently and is rather rare and restricted to communication between God and Jesus and his disciples. At Jesus' baptism a voice was heard declaring Jesus God's Son, and according to Luke this was accompanied by the descent of a dove on Jesus (3:21-22). A similar theophany is also recorded at the transfiguration (Mk 9:2-8). Luke also records the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles on Pentecost day (Acts 2:1-13).

One sees a great difference between the theophanies of the OT and those of the NT. In the OT, the dialogue between God and human beings is normal, whereas this is not the case in the NT. Moreover, in the OT these theophanies occur as God's direct intervention to change human history, whereas in the NT

they merely confirm the course of history. The OT therefore gives the impression of a world-view wherein God has to intervene from time to time to set the course of history, while the NT gives the impression of a world-view wherein history is the unfolding of God's plan which God occasionally confirms by a theophany. All this must be attributed to the world-view out of which divine revelation is presented.

It is evident in the Bible that different human groups appropriated the divine message and made it meaningful to themselves in different ways. Though all the Gospels mean to communicate to the reader the identity of Jesus, each Gospel communicates a different image of Jesus. A close study reveals that each Gospel's Christology is related to the historical human experience which the author and his community had. We find both Jewish and Hellenistic interpretations of the one Jesus. A study of the many titles of Jesus in the New Testament reveals that some of them come from a Palestinian background while others are Hellenistic.[11] Second, each evangelist had a distinctive way of portraying Jesus and his message. Speaking about Luke, with reference to the passion narrative, Donald Senior states:

> Certainly the inspiration for Luke's distinctive view came from currents within his community: ways of understanding Jesus and his mission, ways of celebrating and understanding the Eucharist, stories that developed around the memory of Jesus, and so on. Luke writes from for a Christian community whose experiences are necessarily distinct from those of the communities of Mark and Matthew.[12]

Thus, even though Luke used Mark as source and shared "Q" with Matthew for his passion narrative, his presentation is distinctively different.[13] All this means that the Gospels are a product of an interpretative process, an attempt to relate Jesus to the realities of human experience.

The Bible must not therefore be understood as a vague general revelation, but rather as divine revelation expressed in particular situations, and understood and interpreted by particular peoples at particular times. It is an account of the people's experience of God at different moments of their history. Its message

11 Leopold SABOURIN, *Christology: Basic Texts in Focus*. New York, Alba House, 1984, p. 105.

12. Donald SENIOR, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke*. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989, p. 10.

13. *Ibid.*

is plurifocal and was given over a long period of time, within different cultural settings and with different presuppositions. There is therefore the need to make the message belong to the present setting and to appropriate it for present situations

Conclusion

If evangelization be understood as bringing the Good News of God's salvation to human society, as indeed it is, then the whole Bible must be seen as totally immersed in the process of evangelization This is because both the Old and New Testaments are concerned in diverse ways with manifesting God's salvific action towards humanity. Even the story of creation in the book of Genesis is to be understood as a manifestation of divine salvation, for in creating God also saves and conserves. Read from the vantage point of evangelization, the Bible presents divine salvation as made available to humanity in and through the historical and cultural contexts of the people. This makes it imperative for different peoples today to appropriate the gospel message and make it meaningful to their historical and cultural life situations. It also underlines the need to penetrate the biblical thought and reinterpret it in the context of our own cultures and situations, which is what inculturation is about

The inculturation approach to evangelization has far-reaching implications for the mission of the Church universally Basically it means that the Church must in its mission become all things to all peoples Thus in a context where the Christian religion as an institution has already taken roots in a culture, as in Europe, if its values are no longer being maintained or have been eroded, evangelization from the perspective of inculturation will pay attention to this cultural situation and take the form of a continuous reawakening of Christian values and the Christian vision and faith within the culture of these peoples. In a context where the Christian religion is comparatively new, as in Africa, evangelization will take the form of making the Christian values and the Christian vision of life rooted in their culture, and of making Christianity attain expression in terms of the resources and the values of the African (or other people's) cultures.❑

VJTR (1994) 308-318

Job's "Insufferable Comforters" and the Law of Karma

Richard DeSMET, S.J.

The purpose of this article is to examine the parallelism between the Upanishadic conception of karma and that which is invoked in *The Book of Job* by Job's friends and which he strongly rejects Before that a quick look at the Vedic conception is necessary
Dr DeSmet is Professor Emeritus of the Jnana Deepa Vidhyapeeth, Pune 411014

1. Karma: from the Brāhmanas to the Upanisads

The attention of the Brāhmanas centres on the ritual acts, not on the other human actions "The human self born from the womb is simply mortal But the hyper-self (*adhyātman*) which results from sacrifice is immortal Man can fabricate it by the sacrificial process of adjusting exactly a system of ritual acts (*karma*) "[1]

In the beginning, Prajāpati created the whole world by dismembering himself and when he was only a heart, it is his self that he bewailed "Ah! my ātman!, he said" (*Taittirīya Brāhmana* 2.3.6 1) He, then, emitted a counterpart of that self, namely, the sacrifice, and by the sacrifice he redeemed his self "and thus made it immortal" (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11 1 8 3-4) In the same way the sacrificer redeems his own self by the sacrifice and is to be reborn in the hereafter with a complete and immortal ātman (*ibid* 6)

Indeed, the sacrifice to the self is better than the sacrifice to the gods "Who is he who sacrifices to the atman? It is he who knows thus By this (rite) such limb of mine is fashioned (*samkriyata*), by that (rite) such limb of mine is set in place (*upadhiyata*). As a snake gets rid of his dead skin, he too gets rid

1 See p 131 of my "Fleeting Time and Sacrificially Produced Continuity in Vedic Brahmanism and in Early Christianity," *Indian Theological Studies*, 19/2 (1982), pp 119-144

of this mortal body which is evil. By getting fashioned out of ṛc, yajus, sāman and oblation, he comes to possess the celestial world" (*ibid.* 11.2.6.13-14). "Truly he who knows this passes from the perishable to the imperishable, he conquers repeated death, and attains the full measure of life" (*ibid.* 12.3.4.11).[2]

In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4, the notion of *karma* appears again in relation to man's afterlife but the sacrificial setup and the restriction to the sacrificer have vanished. The new setup is death, the very passing from life to afterlife What is fashioned now is not an imperishable self (it already exists during the present life) but a new body; and it is not fashioned through a combination of rites but from the inner possessions of the self·

> As a goldsmith, making use of the material of a (golden) object, forges another new and more beautiful form, so does this ātman, striking the body aside and dispelling ignorance, make another new and more beautiful form This *ātman is brahman* indeed it consists of discerning consciousness, mind, breath, sight and hearing, of earth, water, wind and space, light and darkness, desire and desirelessness, anger and the lack of it, merit and demerit, it consists of all things This is what is meant by the saying it consists of this (the perceptible), it consists of that (the imperceptible)

After this, Yājñavalkya takes up the role of karma, no longer as merely ritual actions but as the total behaviour of each individual He will note the link between karma and desire and, in consequence of this, distinguish between the man of desire and the man free from any desire·

> As a man acts (*kārin*), as he behaves (*cārin*), so does he become. Whoso does good, becomes good, whoso does evil becomes evil. By good works a man becomes virtuous, by evil works he becomes evil.

Let us note that this formulation simply says that some dispositions are born from corresponding actions, either virtuous or evil. This is a commonplace of popular wisdom But from this a theory will arise, through an unwarranted generalization, holding that all dispositions arise from actions This will be characteristic of Buddhism before becoming a common belief in Hinduism Buddhism will also uphold that desire conditions action, as Yājñavalkya now does

2. On this ritual karma paradigm, a recent book (of which so far I know only from a review) seems to be aluable Herman W Tull, *The Vedic Origins of Karma Cosmos as Man in Ancient Myth and Ritual* Albany State University of New York Press, 1889

But some have said: This person consists of desire alone As is his desire, so is his resolve, as is his resolve, so does he act; as he acts, so does he attain

On this there is this verse

To what his mind [and] character are attached,
To that attached a man goes with his works (*karman*)
Whatever deeds he does here, their rewards he reaps
From the other world he comes back here,,
To the world of deed and work

So much for the man of desire

Yājñavalkya does not indicate an intrinsic link of desire and action with suffering but the Buddha will make this the second cardinal point of his teaching

2. The Book of Job

The date of *The Book of Job*, the greatest poem of Hebrew literature, is unknown but biblical scholars generally agree to place it between B C 650 and 500,[3] a period corresponding to the probable time of the first Upaniṣads The difficult problem of the relation between what people do and what they have to undergo, especially the paradox of the "righteous sufferer," had even earlier preoccupied minds in the Middle East, both in Egypt and in Mesopotamia A chief element of that problem was the divine rulership (of a god or gods) over human lives and its apparent unfairness

A Sumerian text, "Man and His God," and an Akkadian one, "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," both of the seventeenth century B C , are relevant here, the second especially It is a complaint of a suffering devotee against his god But it fails to explore the poignancy of the problem Another poem, dating from about 1000 B C , is "The Babylonian Theodicy," a dialogue between a sufferer who complains against the gods and a sympathetic friend who, after defending them in vague fashion, ends with an avowal that they have made men evil for "they gave twisted speech to the human race, with lies, and not truth, they

3 Its introduction in *The Jerusalem Bible* (London Darton, Longmans & Todd, 1966), p 727 is inclined to place it around B C 500 A M Pope, quoted by its introductor in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Bangalore· Theological Publications of India, 1990), p 467 regards the seventh century as the best guess But John E. Hartley in *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids. Wm B Eerdmans, 1988), dated it from the seventh rather than the sixth century Its dating, therefore, remains an open question.

endowed them forever."[4]

Whatever be the interest and the quality of these early witnesses to deep human questionings, they are only rough attempts compared with the Biblical poem. The latter institutes an intense dialogue between six speakers: Job, 3 + 1 friends, God. It is a bi-polar dialogue: it first lets the men express in contrasted ways the human view of the problem and then lets God speak out his own view. Like the later Bhagavadgita, it is intended to correct and reformulate the current views of man as doer and enjoyer. Like it, it subjects him totally to the rulership of the absolute God but, unlike it, it sharpens up the edge of the human complaint against God by ignoring any idea of guilt in previous births

"Once upon a time, there was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job." As soon as the poem begins, we know that we are hearing a fable The land of Uz is no more real than the land of Oz, though scholars dispute to locate it in either the North-West or the South-West of modern Jordan The hero of this fiction is called Job which, etymologically, means "the Afflicted " This hero is outstanding for his goodness In the short prologue in prose, this is attested by God himself Job is said to be "blameless" (*tām*), "upright" (*yāšār*), "submitted to God" and "avoiding evil " So the contrast is the greatest between his innocence and the extreme afflictions by which he is struck While in the vigour of middle age, blessed with seven sons and three daughters, great possessions and immense herds of cattle, he is reduced in one day to utter destitution, losing sons, houses and cattle Then he is struck down with malignant ulcers from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. Yet, "in all this misfortune Job uttered no sinful word" (2 10) Even when his wife taunted him and said, "Do you now still want to persist in your blamelessness? Curse God and die," "That is foolish woman's talk," he replied, "if we take happiness from God's hand, must we not take sorrow too?" (2.9-10) This is Job's basic attitude, a complete trust in God's providence that distributes joys and sorrows

---

4 Those texts have been published in James B PRITCHARD, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 3rd ed (Princeton Princeton University Press, 1969) in the Supplement, the first pp 589-91, the 2nd pp 596-600 and the third pp 601-4

3. Eliphaz and the Iron Law of Action and Retribution

The news of Job's disaster brings to his side three old friends. First, they mourn with him in silence Then Job himself breaks the silence and in a vehement lamentation curses the day when he was born This soliloquy is a mere complaint, a description and expression of pain but punctuated with questions "why?" It is this questioning which ushers in Eliphaz' speech.

What he speaks about is the law of strict retribution which, he says, is tradition and, besides, a matter of direct experience:

Can you recall guiltless man that perished?
Or have you ever seen good men brought to nothing?
I speak of what I know those who plough iniquity and sow
the seeds of grief reap a harvest of the same kind (4 7-8)

What have we got here if not the law of strict equivalence between the seed we sow and the harvest we reap? This implies the following presuppositions

1 All human actions bring about their own consequences, whether pleasant or unpleasant As an individual's actions belong to him or her alone, so also does their consequential retribution

2. All human experiences, pleasant or unpleasant, are conditioned by previous corresponding actions

3 There is a mathematical equipollence between the action and its fruit

4 The agency that brings about the enjoying of this either sweet or bitter fruit is the sovereign justice of God

5 Since no one life is free from misery, no one is ever innocent in the eyes of God (This, Eliphaz says, was revealed to him in a horrible dream in which he saw a man standing — but his face he could not see — and he heard his voice saying "Was ever any man blameless in the presence of God, or faultless in the presence of his Maker?" — 4 17)

Eliphaz further formulates with particular strength and vividness the second presupposition above

Grief does not grow out of the earth,
nor sorrow spring from the ground
It is man who breeds trouble for himself
as surely as eagles fly to the heights (5 6-7)

But, for him, these are not presuppositions but reliable traditional beliefs and even matter of observation

All this we have observed: it is true.
Heed it and do so to your profit (5:27).

The affinity between these beliefs and the various conceptions of the law of karma beginning with its first Upanishadic formulation is obvious. Not all of them invoke divine justice as the agency of retribution but then they fail to bridge over the distance often observed between an alleged seed-action and its alleged fruit. Bādarāyaṇa and his commentator Śaṅkarācārya quotes the Mīmāṁsakas' opinion that the action produces its fruit either by itself or through a so-called "unprecedented" (*apūrva*) power. The Vedāntins reject this impersonalistic opinion and assert that "the fruit is from the Lord since the śruti manifests Him as the Cause" (*Brahmasūtra* 2.3.41) This is explained by Śaṅkara as follows:

> [As to the first alternative,] actions, since they pass away as soon as done, have no power of bringing about results at some future time, since nothing can spring from nothing
> [As to the second alternative,] we have no right either to assume that the fruit will, at some future time, spring from the so-called *apūrva* which itself is supposed to be a direct result of the deed For that so-called *apūrva* is something of a non-intelligent nature, comparable to a piece of wood or metal, and as such cannot act unless moved by some intelligent being And moreover, there is no proof whatever for the existence of such an *apūrva*
> [It is neither sufficient, since non-intelligent, nor necessary] for the fact of requital may be accounted for by the action of the Lord This is proved by the circumstance of the sruti representing the Lord not only as the giver of fruits (cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up* 4 4 24) but also as the causal agent with reference to all actions whether good or evil (cf *Kauṣītaki Up* 3.8) All Vedanta texts moreover declare that the Lord is the only Cause of all creation" (*Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* 3 2.38-41)

This is Śaṅkara's vindication of the personalistic and Brahma-centric view of the rewarding of our deeds [5]

4. Job's Protest and Rejection of the Law of Retribution

What follows Eliphaz' discourse is Job's vehement protest against this alleged iron law of retribution with its assumption that some past guilt of this must be responsible for his present disastrous condition. He pleads non-guilty:

5. For a more comprehensive study, see my "The Law of Karma: A Critical Examination," *Indian Philosophical Annual*, II. (Madras. 1966), pp. 328-335.

Come, I beg you, look at me:
as man to man I shall not lie.
Relent and grant me justice:
relent, my case is not yet tried (6:28-29).

But now a second friend, Bildad, interrupts him somewhat rudely and rebuts him through an appeal to the rigidity of the law of retribution interpreted as the very law of divine justice:

Is there no end to these words of yours,
to your long-winding blustering?
Can God deflect the course of right,
can the Powerful (*Shaddai*) falsify justice? .
Believe me, God neither spurns a stainless man,
nor lends His aid to the evil (8 2-3.20)

Under the impact of these words, Job's resistance vacillates. Is it not true that God's justice transcends human evidence and judgment?

Indeed, I know it is as you say
how can man be in the right against God?
How dare I plead my cause then
or choose arguments against Him?
Suppose I am in the right, what use is my defence?
For He whom I must sue is judge as well
Though I think myself right, His mouth may condemn me,
though I count myself innocent, it may declare me a hypocrite.
But am I innocent after all? Not even I know that
It is all one and this I dare to say
innocent and guilty, He destroys all alike
When a sudden deadly scourge descends,
He laughs at the plight of the innocent
(9 2 14-15 20-21a 22-23)

Yet, again Job with his realism born from experience, points at the factual evidence that physical evils are not linked with moral-evils· the deadly plagues and scourges strike indifferently both the guilty and the innocent This seems to indicate that the divine conduct of the world is not a simple matter of right and wrong. Or should we say that in the eyes of God we are always wrong unwittingly?

If I resolve to stifle my moans,
change countenance and wear a smiling face,
fear comes over me at the thought of all I suffer
for such, I know, is not Your treatment of the innocent.
And if I am guilty,
why should I put myself to useless trouble?
No use to wash myself with snow,

or bleach my hands pure white
for You will plunge me into dung ...
Yes, I am man, and He is not; and so no argument,
no suit between the two of us is possible (9:27-32).

However, once more, Job rebels under his deep conviction of innocence:

Nonetheless, I shall speak, not fearing Him:
I do not see myself like that at all...
I shall say to God, "Do not condemn me,
but tell me the reason for Your assault.
Is it right for You to injure me...?
You, who enquire into my faults
and investigate my sins,
You know very well that I am innocent (9:35; 10:2-3a.6-7a).

But now Zophar, Job's third friend, in his turn rebukes him with a speech directing him to consider the mystery of God:

Is wordiness in man a proof of right? .
These were your words, "My way of life is faultless,
and in Your eyes I am free from blame "
But if God had a mind to speak.
You would know it is for sin He calls you to account
Can you claim to grasp the mystery of God?
He detects the worthlessness in man,
He sees iniquity and marks it well... .
Renounce the iniquity that stains your hands,
let no injustice live within your tents
(11.2b, 5a, 6c, 7a, 11, 14).

To this speech intended to silence him into blind avowal of guilt and mute submission, Job reacts with bitter irony.

Doubtless, .. when you die, wisdom will die with you! .
I can reflect as deeply as ever you can. .
and who, for that matter, has not observed as much?
A man becomes a laughing-stock to his friends
if he cries to God and expects an answer
The blameless innocent incurs only mockery
"Add insult to injury," think the prosperous,
"Strike the man now that he is staggering."
And yet, the tents of brigands are left in peace,
and those who challenge God live in safety,
and make a god of their two fists (12:2-6).

This is the state of affairs: just the opposite of what the law of retribution asserts. Upright actions are followed by loss of wealth, health and progeny; evil actions by prosperity and contentment. Yet it is also true that God is the Lord who rules the world. This is the scandal that rents asunder the mind of Job:

This state of things is all of God's making.
He holds in His power the soul of every living thing
and the breath of each man's body..
I have seen all this with my own eyes,
heard with my own ears, and understood.
I mean to remonstrate with God
As for you, [my friends,] you are only charlatans,
physicians in your own estimation.
Your old maxims are proverbs of ash,
Your retorts, retorts of clay
Silence! Now I will do the talking
You shall see, I will proceed by due form of law,
persuaded, as I am, that I am guiltless
How many faults and crimes have I committed,
what law have I transgressed?
[O God,] why do You look on me as Your enemy?
[As to you, friends,] how often have I heard all this before!
What INSUFFERABLE COMFORTERS you are,
rising like witnesses for the prosecution,
to utter slander to my very face
(12 9-10, 13 1 4 12 11 13a 18 22 24b 16 8)

Job's dialogue with his "friends" continues for another fifteen chapters and comes to an end with his final protest and defence

If God weighs me on honest scales,
being God, He cannot fail to see my innocence .
Who can get me a hearing from God?
When my Adversary has drafted His writ against me, .
I shall bind it round my head like a royal turban
I will give Him an account of every step of my life
and go as boldly as a prince to meet Him (31 6 35 36b 37)

What follows is an interpolated speech attributed to a certain Elihu After that, God (Yahweh) himself dialogues with Job, chiefly asking him grandiloquent questions to make him realize the limits of his own perspective and also those of his friends' perspective God is not bound by any law of retribution as understood by people God's rulership and the ultimate goal of his providence cannot be encompassed by men. He is the Master of the forces of evil and will not allow them to triumph. Since this statement concedes Job's chief head of complaint, he can but accept it mildly

And this was the answer which Job gave to Yahweh·
"I know that You are all-powerful,

what You conceive You can perform.
I am the man who obscured Your designs
with my empty-headed words.
I have been holding forth on matters I cannot understand,
on puzzles beyond me and my knowledge" (42:1-3).

Finally, in the epilogue Yahweh rebukes the three "sages":

> When Yahweh had said all this to Job, he turned to Eliphaz, the man from Teman: "I burn with anger," he said, "against you and your two friends for not speaking truthfully about Me as my servant Job has done (42:7).

Then, according to the "All is well that ends well" convention, the Lord gives Job twice as much as he had before and Job begets anew seven sons and three daughters "and in all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters." Job "saw his children and his children's children, four generations, and he died old and full of days (42:15-17).

But the case of the innocent sufferer is not so easily settled. That conventional ending runs counter to the realism so unequivocally expressed by Job in the poem. Many an innocent person never sees in this life the end of his unfair suffering. As to seeing it in his afterlife the poem hardly opens up at all the perspective of afterlife vindication.

5. The New Job: the Suffering Messiah of 1 Peter

Five or six centuries later, it is no longer a fictional hero but an outstanding figure of history, called Jesus, who is the exemplary "innocent sufferer " Already thousands of people are raising up towards him eyes and hearts full of a new hope. His chief disciple Peter writes from Rome, not long before dying in the persecution unleashed by emperor Nero after the catastrophic fire which destroyed two thirds of Rome in July A.D. 64:

> Christ suffered for sins, once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God
> He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit..
> Baptism now saves you — not as a removal of dirt from the body — but as an approach to God for good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus the Christ (1 Peter, 3·18-21)

This brief text is bristling with new ideas which we may sort out as follows:

1. Jesus, the new Job, was righteous, yet he suffered and not for a while only but up to death.
2. He suffered not as requital for sins of his own but for the sins

of the unrighteous.
3. His suffering was not a haphazard event. It had a purpose, namely, "to bring you to God."
4. This sacrifice fulfilled this purpose "once for all." It is thus the sacrifice which has put an end to all sacrifices by fulfilling their common purpose which was to bring all, men and women, to God.
5. After his death in the body he was made alive in the spirit or, more probably, in the Spirit, i.e., by divine Power. (This took place through his resurrection on the third day after he died. This resurrection was not an unmanifest afterlife event but a fact vouched for by apparitions during which he consoled and comforted those Israelites who had believed in him and his divine mission.)
6. Men and women of other nations have now believed in the Apostles' testimony and through baptism been immersed sacramentally into Jesus' suffering death and glorious resurrection.

Thus Christ's meaningful suffering and rewarding resurrection have introduced into human life a meaningfulness which *The Book of Job* could not provide They have broken open the exclusivism which confined karma and its sequels within the individual doer the evil deeds done by the unrighteous are requited by the sufferings of the Righteous One Moreover, the latter takes up our good deeds and undeserved suffering and renders them meritorious by merging them with his own and making us partakers of his blissful resurrection. Action is now a field of reciprocity within the limitless merit of his unique sacrifice It is the field of love in solidarity, of love not only affective but effective of the good of all

Borrowing from a very different context, we may speak here like Śāntideva of "the sameness of 'self' and 'other'" (*parātma-samatā*) and of "the transference of 'self' and 'other'" (*parātma-parivartana*) " □

VJTR 58 (1994) 319-323

Listen to the Spirit

Mother Earth

June 5th: World Environment Day

On June 5th the world observes the Day of Environment to remind us of the earth from which we come, on which we depend, for which we begin to feel responsible. The problems of environment have come as a shock to the modern world In the not very distant past we took nature for granted: she gives us all we need air, water, plentiful treasures hidden in her depth, and she faithfully produces all the food we need Our concern began with the annoyance of the polluted air in the cities and the dirty waters of the rivers which were poisoned by chemical factories But these were considered local problems which could be brought under control The shock came when we began to realize the dimension of the damage done to nature so that the very survival of our human family is at stake How long can we still live when our forests are destroyed, when the climate changes, when the protective layers of our atmosphere are depleted? Visions of catastrophe were painted before our frightened phantasy not only the glaciers of our mountains will disappear but the masses of ice in the Antarctic will melt away, the oceans will rise, our coastal cities will be buried under the waves In India we are concerned most with the growing extension of the desert invading our arable land and the destruction of green valleys under gigantic irrigation works depriving the original inhabitants of their homeland

The world-wide anxiety about mother earth was voiced at the World Congress in Rio de Janairo which witnessed the unequal battle between the concern for a healthy life of the human family in harmony with nature and the interests of expanding business which in thousand ways exploits nature and thrives on its destruction

On this Environment Day all these concerns for our life and for the physical survival of our human family are in our mind and become a prayer But if we listen to the Spirit we shall realise not only that the preservation of nature is vital for our physical health and welfare but that it concerns our whole life The earth is not only the quarry from which we break stones for building cities and a storeroom which supplies whatever we need for physical life She is the womb from which we are born; she feeds us not only in childhood but all through life. She nourishes also our minds and expands before our

wondering eyes the richness of creation, its beauty and harmony, and also its dark depth and frightening powers. She gives faithful assurance of continuity, yet is full of ever new surprises. In her we realize the irresistible drives of life but also the infinite calmness of a starlit night. Every day she offers us new puzzles to stir our minds and keep us searching for the inscrutable mysteries of the universe. Truly, the earth is more than a supermarket: she is our mother.

She also wants us to share in the secret of her own life, the deeper truth which cannot be seen with bodily eyes. She will tell us of this secret if, at least for a short while, we are ready to get out of the daily turmoil and become silent. She will touch our eyes and we shall begin to see more than her colours and forms. She will tell us of the mandate she has received from God to speak to us about her origin, the origin of all her being and moving. This mission has been entrusted to her from the beginning, to make known to her children God's own invisible nature, his eternal power and deity (cf. Rom 1:20). From all the wonders of her work, from her greatness and beauty, her children might learn how much more powerful is He who made her (cf. Wis 13.6f).

Such was the understanding of nature also in the ancient spiritual tradition of our own country as we find it in the Bhagavadgita in which many of our Hindu brothers and sisters even today find their spiritual identity. It tells us that human life can never be isolated, taken out of the infinite process that keeps the universe moving and binds it together. In ancient language this process is described as sacrifice, not a ritual offering but the divine communication of giving and receiving. All beings are part of the cosmos and share in God's own creative power. "These worlds would fall into ruins if I ceased to work" (3,24). Human activity must be in tune with the divine work. The devas — the cosmic agencies — provide us with rain and feed us through the harvest, we, in turn, have to feed them through offerings (3,11). "If the devas are nourished by sacrifice, they shall give you enjoyment. A thief is who takes enjoyment without sacrifice" (3,12). "Eating without sacrifice is sin" (3,13). We are included in a divine harmony beyond individual isolation. Breaking out of it means disturbing the divine order, and it leads to destruction.

In this movement of the universe God reveals himself. He is the mystery beyond all that can be seen. "Know me as the womb of all beings" (7,6). Whatever beauty and greatness appear in our world are his manifestation. "I am the taste in water, the rediance of moon and sun ... the fragrance of the earth and the brightness of fire, the life of all that lives, the eternal seed of all beings" (7,8-11). There is nothing on earth that is not transparent to his greatness and beauty. Yet he is beyond all. Never should this earth and all its splendour be identified with him. He is Himself beyond all creation. "They are in me, not I in them" (7,12). The transcendent God contains all beings in himself, but he is more than the world. It is our persistent temptation to take the

world of the earthly qualities (*gunas*) as the ultimate reality, to get stuck in it and to reach only God's veil (*maya*). But "those who come to me reach beyond the veil" (7,14)

This is the mystery of the earth in ancient language. We have to translate and express it in terms of our time. the awareness of the wholeness of nature, the mutual interdependence of all creatures has become the basis in the modern understanding of the world and of life Thus is the foundation of ecology. Nature is harmony and integration, receiving and giving. No one is allowed to break out of this harmony, to disturb it and thereby ultimately to destroy himself To do so is — in the Gita language — sin and theft· sin because this order comes from God and is sanctioned by him, theft because we appropriate, exploit, destroy what is not ours, what is given to all for their well-being Every aspect of our ecological disaster reveals selfish greed, unbridled desires to possess, control, exploit for oneself what is meant to be for the service of all

The reason for this selfish greed, the urge to step out of this order, comes from the misunderstanding of the earth, from taking the created world as the ultimate reality In the words of the Gita to cling to the veil instead of the divine mystery The veil becomes the final truth This is human blindness, the tragedy of our human family, on all levels in high philosophy, when we identify the infinite universe with the Absolute, we do it in our pragmatic view of life and world when mother earth is used as a storeroom from which we take (or steal) whatever we find useful to fulfil needs and supply luxuries, it is finally lived in the banality of a lifestyle that knows nothing but money and pleasure

A true ecological revolution must grow from a renewed spiritual awareness of our human existence and the meaning of our world The present struggle for a better environment is necessary and we pray for its success in averting disasters and stopping the progressive destruction of our earth This struggle is animated by our urge to survive and to protect ourselves against criminal "thieves" who steal from us God's gifts of fresh air, healthy water and the flora and fauna of our planet

We need this struggle, but it is not sufficient We may compare it with the work of the police which tries to keep our streets and houses safe But the police cannot renew our society So also a merely pragmatic approach to ecological problems cannot restore to the earth its God-given beauty and harmony The Spirit must be at work in the human family so that we love again our mother the earth as God's first and primary gift to his children

Much of what we learned from the Gita could be found also in the Bible in a different language But the Bible adds something to our understanding of the earth which has deep significance The earth is our home.

Israel was a nomadic people. In its Patriarchal pre-history we read of God's mysterious command to Abraham, "Leave your country, your

people, and your father's house and go to a land that I will show you" (Gen 2:1). Abraham has no home any more, and his offspring remained nomad for centuries. Nomads are proud, they roam the desert and despise the petty farmers who are tied to their soil. But nomads are also homesick. They have never a place to rest, to settle, to call their own. So for centuries Israel lives on God's promise: I will show you a land. They actually begin to settle but famine drives them on, and they come to Egypt where they find food but become slaves

Now the promise becomes more concrete, and is addressed to Moses: "I have come down to rescue them and to bring them to a good and spacious land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:8) Yet they still have to cross the desert for forty years, to taste its barrenness and to thirst. Once more their entire future is at stake when the explorers come back with the frightening news of the people who live there, mighty warriers before whom "we seemed like grasshoppers in our eyes" (Num 13 33). They want to return But Yahweh is with them They must know that they conquered the land not with their own strength, and for ever they will sing psalms of thanksgiving "He gave the land as an inheritance to his people" (Ps 135 12) At last they are settled

But now the land becomes their temptation — the temptation from the beginning the gift begins to replace the Giver Soon they become too settled and secure in the land, in their land, and they must be reminded of Yahweh's word "The land is mine, and you are but aliens and tenants" (Lev 25 23) They also learn from the Canaanites the art of cultivating fields, but soon they also tune in with their religion of fertility and begin to identify Yahweh with the baals, the gods of fruitful fields. The prophets raise their warning voice against vice and injustice in the land "There is no faithfulness, no love There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery" (Hos 4 1f) Finally the early threat comes true "You will be snatched away from the land you are about to enter" (Deut 28 43) they are taken into exile!

No other punishment could be compared to the utter desolation of exile from the land God had given them But God remains faithful. The prophets who had foretold the ruin become heralds of hope· "I will take you out of the nations and bring you back into your own land" (Ezek 36.24). During the time of exile the nostalgic memories of their homeland had become like a dream in which all the hidden desires of the heart are realized The homeland becomes the vision of the final fulfilment of all creation in the home where all journeys end· "Behold, I will create a new heaven and a new earth" (Is 65 17)

This vision, born in exile, remains alive in the New Testament. It will be the full revelation of God in his creation: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." It is our final home where we are with God, "the dwelling place of God among mortals, He will be with them, they will be His people and God himself will be with them and be their God" (Rev 21:1-4). The glorified earth becomes our home of eternal life. This

is not depicted in a language of unearthly spirituality as if our earth were only the waiting room for another world. It is our earth, pure, fertile, healing. The stream of water flowing through the city is crystal clear and the trees of life growing on both sides bear fruit every month of the year, and their leaves are for the healing of the nations (Rev 22:1-4). This is mother earth redeemed with her children in a world without night.

All this seems rather distant from the observance of Environment Day It surely should not lure us into a dream world and make us forget the actual problems, the ozone holes in the atmosphere, the smog in the city, the poisoned water We shall not forget on this day the helpless tribes whose homes are drowned under irrigation lakes. We also hope and pray that in industrial planning and in legislation the concern for human life prevails. But the Spirit may invite us beyond all these concerns to celebrate this day in love for our mother earth, God's primeval gift to us, the never-exhausted manifestation of his love and care for us If this love of mother earth comes back to our human family there will be no need any longer of observing a Day of Environment.

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Correspondence

The right word, please!

Dear Father,

This is in reference to the articles of Fr Subhash Anand and Fr Peter Doherty last year on the Eucharist

I would like to suggest that *param prasad* is not a suitable word We are often forced to announce just before communion at Masses which non-Catholics attend that "*param prasad*" is only for Catholics.

For a Hindu to refuse *prasad* is as insulting as not to offer it. We just can't take a word with all its implications and put our own meaning into it. I would suggest "*Eucharistia sanskar*" or something else. *Sanskar* is not given to every one

Another case in a point. One of our Religious Houses had the word *Ashram* written on it in big letters. Some Hindu pilgrims on their way to Haridwar on foot, stopped there to take some rest. To their surprise they were asked to leave! They objected saying that an *Ashram* is meant to be open to any genuine pilgrim seeking shelter.

Bishop's House,
283, Roorkee Rd
Meerut 250001

Patrick NAIR
(*Bishop of Meerut*)

Unfinished Christology

Sir,

Prof. Felix Wilfred's Paper (*Vidyajyoti*, Nov 1993) is an able presentation of the Christological question for the Indian situation I expected that scripture scholars and christologists across the country would react to this Paper so that its "tentative reflections" could be supplemented and clarified, and a more definitive Christology could emerge

The contention that, if Christ is unique, Christianity must be unique, is cogent (p.654) But then Christianity is not easy to talk about It is not identified with the Christian churches. It is not one religion among others It is the whole Christ whose identity permeates our world How this Christ-phenomenon can be investigated is an open question

The importance of the *marga* in the matter of discovery of the mystery of Jesus is unquestioned It is through his deeds and words that Jesus revealed himself But the *marga* is meant to "disclose his being and truth" (670) Then inevitably there arises the all-important question what is his being and truth? This is the question about Jesus' "metaphysical constitution" which cannot be side-tracked as the Paper tries to do How can it be claimed that Jesus own crucial question, "What do you say that I am?" is unimportant for us in India? This question is not about his path or teaching It is about 'the metaphysical constitution' of his personality

To say that the language of uniqueness is not found invariably in all the layers of the New Testament, is a gross under-statement (668) The absolute uniqueness of Jesus is perfectly clear even in the synoptic Gospels No guru on earth taught and acted with the authority that Jesus spontaneously assumed Correcting all the teaching that went before, and setting an unalterable norm for all future teaching, Jesus alone could say with unquestioned authority "But I say to you " (Mt 5) Who is this I? Isn't this the central question of Christology?

It is possible to explain away the uniqueness texts cited on p 668 But it is good to remember that the Church's faith in Jesus is not conditioned by the reductionist exegesis of a few modern (liberal) theologians and scholars.

"Seen from the Indian perspectives the need to use the language of uniqueness does not arise" (672) In a similar context, the multi-religious context of the Graeco-Roman world, Paul thought quite otherwise· "Although there may be so-called gods in heaven and on earth — as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords" — yet for us there is one God and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1 Cor 8.5f) Paul does not think that what he says here about Jesus can be said about any other teacher or saviour in human history It would seem,

therefore, that we are obliged to use the language of uniqueness if we wish to state the truth of Jesus.

When the uniqueness of Jesus is obscured, "conversion" becomes irrelevant: "They (Indians) can let themselves be drawn by the splendour of his (Jesus') person... even as they remain immersed in their own faith-experience" (671). A strange supposition! Just imagine a Buddhist who remains immersed in his own faith-experience, while he lets himself be drawn by the splendour of Jesus' person. Obviously this drawing would be substantially different from what Paul and others experienced.

Holding one's own faith does not mean disparaging other faiths. All believers are welcome to abide by their own convictions, while respecting others' divergent views

It is not clear what is meant by saying that "an Indian Christology will not be simply a local variant of a general Christology" (672). Perhaps it is a weakness of this Paper that it abstracts far too much from perennial Christology Nor can it be conceded that "no Christology can claim to be comprehensive; all are, in one way of other, *partial*" (667). Half truths can be more dangerous than falsehood A Christology that does not spell out clearly the unique mystery of the person of Jesus, is unsatisfactory.

The *marga* receives its distinctiveness and efficacy from the Jesus who taught it, and exemplified is in himself Many prophets have been tortured and put to death The Christian faith is that Jesus alone saved the entire world by his atoning death The why of this is not understood except through the mystery of Jesus' person

A Christology that stops short of a clear definition of the mystery of Jesus' person remains unfinished and ineffective. The task of theology is to illumine the divine mystery *Sarvadharma samabhava* need not stand in the way

C.M. CHERIAN, S.J.

Book Reviews

Theology

Reading in Indian Christian Theology. Vol.1 (ISPCK Study Guide, 29). Edited by R.S. SUGIRTHARAJAH and Cecil HARGREAVES. Delhi. ISPCK, 1993 Pp x-261 Rs 45 ISBN 81-7214-139-4.

This book attempts to give a panoramic view of Indian Christian theology. It is only an attempt because India being such a vast country with numerous languages, cultures, ethnic groups, religions and diverse problems, its theology flowers with different colours, shades and fragrance To capture such a rich mix in a small book is not easy We have to admire the editors' patience in their careful search for already published, meaningful and relevant articles from various journals which reflect on more or less all Christian themes

Part 1 deals with methods and ways of doing theology J Russell Chandran critically surveys the development of Christian theology in India starting from the early missionaries like Robert de Nobili and Bartholomeus Ziegenbalg, Hindus as Ram Mohan Roy, K C Sen, Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi and Christians within the churches like B Upadhyaya A J Appaswamy, P Chenchiah The concludes with P D Devanandan, R Panikkar and M M Thomas Samuel Amirtham presents different models of theology currently at work such as the pilgrim model, praxis model gurukul model mission model S Kappen articulates a way of theologising in the Indian context for the transformation of society He stresses that the Jesus tradition must merge with radical currents in Indian religious traditions and with positive insights of Marxism. From such a symbiosis a new Asian Christian theology should emerge M Azariah writes about the why, who and what of the Dalit theology. Nirmal Minz sees tribal historical reality from a biblical perspective Aruna Gnanadason discusses the brief history of the Indian feminist movement and its resources and methods for a relevant feminist theology

Part 2 deals with the Indian Christian understandings of Jesus: Sadhu Sunder Singh's "The Living Christ," P Chenchiah's "Wherein lies the uniqueness of Christ?" are theological reflections on Jesus Though these men are not academic theologians yet their reflections are very relevant and meaningful. They spring from a profound faith in Jesus M M Thomas points out the meaning and relevance of Christ in secular ideologies with sound biblical insights S.J Samartha and K L Klostermaier's articles are critical reflections on the meaning and relevance of Christ in multi-religious contexts

Part 3 deals with peoples' stories and their theologies R.C Das in his article "Experience of a Santani Christian" says that a Hindu need not deny his tradition altogether to reach the truth Y D Tiwari's article "From Vedic Dharma to the Christian Faith" is a fascinating biographical testimony The "Letters to St Paul" by a group of women who have gone through his Letters from a feminist perspective, indicates the awakened conscience of women T K Thomas explores liberation themes in the Indo-Anglian novels James Massey presents the ingredients for a Dalit Theology S J Samartha's "A Hindu Christian Funeral" is a moving account of a funeral in which Hindus and Christians participated meaningfully transcending their religious boundaries. C Murray Rogers' article "Swamiji the Friend" is about his last encounter with Swami Abhishiktananda and touches the heart of the reader

Part 4 deals with Indian Biblical Hermeneutics. Paul Gregorios analyses Western as well as Indian Hermeneutics and their advantages and limitations. George Soares-Prabhu in his article "Historical Critical Method for India" offers a relevant and meaningful exegetical method for India in the light of social and political contexts. A J Appasamy explores the spiritual treasures and Sister Vandana the significance of water symbolism in the fourth Gospel from Indian perspectives. Samuel Rayan reads the fourth Gospel from the perspective of the poor which differs from the traditional advaitic, non-historical and spiritual reading George Koonthanam presents his reflections on Isaiah 3 12-15 from a Dalit perspective

This is a very good study guide for all the beginners in Indian Christian theology. The editors have succeeded in compiling very relevant and inspiring articles more or less reflecting all aspects of our theology The book concludes with a Glossary of Indian Sanskritic expressions and equivalent meanings in English. There is also a Bibliography for further reading Another consolation is that the book is available for an affordable price

Mohan JOSEPH, S J

Religion As Social Protest. By Stan LOURDUSAMY Calcutta Multi Book Agency, 1993 Pp 162 Rs 35

S Lourdusamy was conscious of the criticism that would crop up after he published the book *Religion as Political Weapon* (1990) because the book dealt with only the negative aspect of religion. He did not stop with that book. He considers that we must also see religion as an important element in life, particularly in the life of the poor and weaker sections of society

In the first part of this book religion is perceived as preserving the status quo, the dominant group of society manipulating the poor. In an historical analysis of different streams of religion it is revealed that religion intervenes in the life of the people and responds to their questions and aspirations. In the beginning there was a classless society where people had to struggle with nature, so they made use of magic and incantation. Christianity proclaimed fulfilment in the next world, slaves and weaker sections of society embraced Christianity But they had to remain slaves The ideology had a legitimizing character

In the Great Tradition, the formal structures, the defined system of belief, dogmas and doctrines, and the officially canonized scriptures control the life of the people In the Little Tradition there is a different world view and a system of belief related to the supernatural which may be suppressed by the ruling class As conditions deteriorate the religion of the status quo cannot fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people At this juncture the Little Tradition can be a form of social protest when the masses resist the oppression This social protest should be the religious rallying point for the masses In their movements and struggles people take life in their own hands The recent movements like the Jharkhand and the Dalit are responses of the masses in deteriorating conditions Kabir and Nanak were persons who conveyed a new, liberative concept of God Liberation theology also is an attempt to reach out more effectively to the oppressed masses, to help them free themselves from oppressive situations The role of the Church is related to this task because we do not encounter God in a vaccum. This prophetic and revolutionary role has religious as well as political implications

I consider this book a conscious effort to see how religion can be a power to transform the condition of the oppressed The author has made an analysis of the historical evolution of different streams of religion. Though his is not an elaborate critique of religion and its role, he has emphasized the protest

element of religion, which is his concern in the book. It is not so common that the Jharkhand and Dalit movements are seen in a religious context By doing this Lourdusamy significantly points out the effectiveness of Little Traditions. This may lead to a reading of history from the underside, which is so necessary today

V.M. JOSE, S J.

The God of Life. By Gustavo Gutiérrez. Maryknoll/New York. Orbis Books, 1991 Pp xviii-214 $ 13 95 ISBN 0-88344-760-6

Gustavo Gutiérrez is called by some the father of liberation theology His books *A Theology of Liberation* and *We Drink from Our Own Wells* have contributed immensely to liberation theology and to the developemant of a liberation spirituality Based on sound biblical scholarship, the present work is an exploration into the biblical revelation of the God of life, given the experience of Latin American people characterized by "the hunger for God and the hunger for bread " The basic trend in the book is that the poor, rooted in the experience of death, marginalized and exploited in Latin America, proclaim a God who liberates and gives life — *The God of Life*

The author divides the book into three major sections, namely, *A God who is love The Kingdom that Jesus proclaims*, and *How the God of the Kingdom is proclaimed* in action and words by the poor Each section takes up one of the three classical questions raised by people — *Who is God? Where is God?* and *How are we to speak of God?*

The theme of the first section is *Who is God* The author reveals here a God who is love — a God who liberates, who does justice and makes a covenant, and confronts the idols of death Gutiérrez refers extensively to the Scriptures, from the exodus event to the liberative actions of Jesus narrated by the evangelists. By juxtaposing Israel's experience of death in the form of oppression in Egypt with the experience of the Latin American people who confront death in their own oppression, Gutiérrez discovers a God of life. Here there is a fine analysis of the term 'goel' used by the Israelites to speak of a God who is a friend and a companion and who protects their rights. In this way Gutiérrez emphasizes the nearness of God to oppressed people in their struggles against hunger and death. Referring to the covenant that God makes with his people, located within a dialectic of death and life, Gutiérrez speaks of the denial or suppression of life in Latin America as the final step before the revelation of authentic life in a covenant of love

The second section draws our attention to the Israelites' experience of exile, oppression and suffering Gutiérrez points out that the radical question regarding the presence of God is raised in particular historical contexts. However the author clarifies that the question is not just merely a cry of suffering and distress It is a search of faith. In Latin America people raise this question because they are seeking to be near God by making His plan in human history their own Gutiérrez also points out that God continuously comes to his people and his presence is felt where his life-giving plan is present

At this point he articulates his reflections on the incarnation as the irruption of God into human history, making it meaningful in the concrete setting and circumstances of Latin American repression, struggles and hopes under dictatorships that sow death among the poor Sharing his insights on the great 'messianic inversion' through which Jesus makes the Kingdom known, the author urges readers to enter into human history, by living among the poor and oppressed We have to seek the Kingdom by entering into the tent the Son has pitched in our midst

In the third section the author

makes a full analysis of the question '*How are we to talk about God?*' The question is all the more profound when one speaks of the God of life and love in a situation of death and injustice. The author answers this radical question by recourse to the book of Job. Using Job's realization that he must transcend his individual experience, and his own awareness that solidarity with the poor is required by faith in a God who has a special love for the disinherited and exploited of human history, the author points to the preferential love required of a committed person.

This preferential love is the basis of what Gutiérrez calls the prophetic way of speaking about God. It is thus preference for the poor which is the key element in revealing authentic divine justice. Gutiérrez sums up his thought: the God of the Kingdom is proclaimed by actions and words that proclaim life to be the ultimate meaning of human history.

This book, with its biblical inspiration and recalling the experience of men and women committed to the process of liberation in the oppressed and exploited land of Latin America, is very relevant today in our context. More and more men and women in India are opting for the liberation of socially and economically exploited and alienated people, who not only encounter a God who liberates but also proclaim him as *the God of Life*.

The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles. By René Latourelle. Translated by Matthew J O'Connel. Mahwah. Paulist Press. Pp. vi-371 $ 14.95 (pbk) ISBN 0-8091-2997-3.

Latourelle approaches the hermeneutic of the signs of credibility of the Christian faith with basic questions: Is Jesus identifiable as a historical reality? Do Jesus and his message answer the radical questions of human existence? Is Jesus God-with-us? The author studies theologically the signs that reveal and accredit Jesus as Son of God, the Father.

The reactions and responses of the people, friend and foe, who witnessed the miracles are first analysed. For example: "What is this?"; "A new teaching given with authority!", "Who can forgive sins but God alone?", "We never saw anything like this!", "Where did this man get all these?", "What is the wisdom given to him?", "What mighty works are wrought by his hand?"

Jesus' various miracles are not isolated signs but form one whole in the constellation of signs that make up the economy of salvation. The signs are inseparable from Jesus, the apex sign, inseparable from the salvation that affects the entire person of each one in her or his context, inseparable from conversion and the Kingdom, and inseparable from revelation. A miracle is a pointer to the agent. The resurrection is the miracle of miracles, the sign of signs. The Gospels are not mere gnosis but both the 'deeds' (*opera*) and the 'words' (*verba*) of Jesus. We find this double aspect emphasised in Vatican II documents, to which the author often refers. He also explores the riches contained in the miracles of Jesus for the daily life of the individual Christian and of the Church.

The book has three parts: the problem of approach and pre-understanding, the problem of the historicity of miracles, the theological problems of their classification. Latourelle contextualises his study by an emphasis on the human person. A theology without reference to humanity is no theology at all. We are all faced with many challenging problems, solitude, otherness, love, friendship, suffering, illness, death, family, profession, work, research, technology, progress, freedom, liberation, culture, politics, economics ... . Does Christology touch upon these realities and problems, reflect upon them and

endeavour to find answers? This calls for self-criticism in theology, self-explanation and a responsiveness to the complete human context. The emphasis must be shifted from object to subject (person), from apologetics to dialogue (opening up)

The author considers briefly those writers who oppose the miracles on philosophical grounds Paul Hazard, Spinoza, Voltaire, Hume, Kant, Bultmann.

In the study of the problem of historicity a detailed analysis of twenty-eight miracles is presented To each miracle a lengthy bibliography is attached

The miracles of Jesus are the signs of the Kingdom. In the miracles Jesus demands recognition of his mission and person When we summarize all the elements found in the narratives we realize we are faced with the gradual eruption of the Kingdom

A human and spiritual glow is always present in the miracles The messianic age is at hand, the good shepherd is revealed who feeds the hunger and quenches the thirst of the sheep, who carries our sicknesses who triumphs over evil who cares for every one who serves the community Jesus appears as lord of the living and the dead There is a personal approach, a holistic healing, a silencing of the unspoken word of the opponents, a dethroning of the strong ones in favour of the weaker a victory over a legion of oppressive forces. Humanity is made new and vibrant in the sign of the raising of the dead to life There is personal contact with lowly women, the end of alienation and isolation, the individuals being once again integrated into the community

Conversion of heart is a prerequisite of healing Faith means power over natural events and elements, the weak gaining bodily strength. Deafness, blindness, muteness — the factors that alienate — change into hearing, seeing and speaking, involving a joyful participation in the life of the community The poor accept God's Kingdom; the disciples grow emotionally; the legalistic perception of the sabbath gives way to the freedom for God's children; the stress is on faith and growth, revealing God's Kingdom here and now.

The theological treatment classifies miracles according to types and functions The data of tradition and the magisterium are presented together with the way miracles were recognised, specially in their relation to holiness and faith The different perspectives of each of the four evangelists form a good background for understanding each miracle A book to discover the deeper meaning of Christ through his signs

P.A JOSEPH, OFM Cap.

Mission and Ministry in the Global Church. By Anthony Bellagamba

Maryknoll Orbis Books, 1992 Pp ix-150 $18 95 ISBN 0-88344-813-0

This is a good book of missiology and ecclesiology Bellagamba's rich experience at various levels of mission service and teaching has contributed in a marked way to the writing of this study It reflects an interaction with mission personnel throughout the world, their ideas and experience It is an innovative work with much pastoral value for the Church's mission today

The first chapter surveys the megatrends that affect the Church and her mission today, and outlines a possible response to each of them The resurgence of cultural traditions finds inculturation as its fitting response. The revival of religious experiences requires dialogue as the Church's response The increasing need for personal encounter with God within small faith communities is another feature that affects the Church's mission. This megatrend found in the basic ecclesial communities demands the development of small faith communities in today's mission. Developing a global Church is the answer in

mission to the crisis that the Western Church as institution experiences. Globalization calls for universalism. The megatrend of the poor as the new evangelizers demands a preferential option for them as the response in mission. Another important megatrend is the new type of presence and the significance of women in the life of Church and society which calls for equality, partnership, co-responsibility and co-ministry

Chapters 2 and 3 deal extensively with the emerging global Church as envisaged by prominent figures like Avery Dulles and Leonardo Boff, and some theological reflections on the nature of the Church. Chapter 4 throws light on the various ways of understanding mission It describes a variety of concepts, models, and practices of mission The important aspects, in my judgment, are mission as liberation, as mutuality, as fulfilment and as radical discipleship Chapter 5 deals entirely with team ministry and its various dynamics The rest of the book speaks about missionary spirituality, formation, and the role of Mary in the Church's mission

The author aims at helping cross-cultural missionaries to evaluate and improve their mission ministry and style of functioning The main target group is the cross-cultural personnel involved in the Church's mission

This book will serve as resource material for teachers and students of theology (missiology and ecclesiology), and for all those involved in mission work Simplicity and an attractive presentation stand out as features of the book. The approach is scientific and the writing graceful

Francis PERUMALIL, S J.

Quest for an Indian Church. An Exploration of the Possibilities Opened up by Vatican II Edited by Kurien KUNNUMPURAM, S J and Lorenzo FERNANDO Anand Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1993. Pp xi-215. $ 6. Rs 46 (pbk).

This is the eighth book in the series brought out by Jesuit Theological Forum Reflections. All the papers which make up this volume were originally written on the occasion of the seminar to mark the silver jubilee of the Second Vatican Council. According to the editors, the purpose of these papers was not primarily to study or critique the Council documents but to explore the possibilities which Vatican II had opened up for the Church in India Hence all "the papers presented here are future oriented, in the sense they look forward to the realization in the Indian Church of what was made possible by the Council" (p. x). These papers written in the context of developments in the world at large and in India particularly have immense value for all Christians who are struggling to make the Christian faith and community relevant in India

In his paper "Towards a New Ecclesiology in the Light of Vatican II," Kurien Kunnumpuram highlights seven significant shifts made by the Council from institution to mystery, from papal monarchy to episcopal collegiality, from hierarchy to people, from Universal Church to local churches, from Roman Catholicism to Christian churches, from one true religion to many religions and from the Church to the world This new understanding should be the springboard to evolve a more meaningful Church for India In "Vatican II and the Mission of the Church in India," Jacob Kavunkal takes stock of all the factors that have influenced the mission and points out that the future of the mission in the context of religious pluralism is the working for a just society, a Kingdom-centered theology and inculturation. These are to be the future concerns of the Indian Church.

While taking in to account how the Church brought qualitative change in its approach to the world through the documents, the late George V Lobo in his paper "The Church's Social Mission

according to Vatican II" explains the relation between Church and world, sacred and profane, mutual help, humankind and Church. He also addresses the issues of the Christological task today, salvation and humanization, the Church's socio-political mission, roles of clergy and laity and concludes with post conciliar developments. Francis X D'Sa's "The Dharma of Religion. Toward an Indian Theology of Religion" critiques all the developments in theology of religions from Vatican II till now and points out necessary ingredients for a theology of religions for the future.

Paul Puthanangady's "Towards a New Liturgy in the Light of Vatican II" highlights the radical changes brought out by the Council and its implementation in the post-conciliar period and also points out some of the obstacles to the implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* within the liturgical Constitution itself and outside it. He concludes by pointing out a few characteristics of liturgy for the future. Kunchena Pathil's "Vatican II and the Rite Question in India" briefly outlines the inter-ecclesial context and problem and some important contributions of Vatican II in this regard and subsequent developments in inter-ecclesial relations. He concludes with some of the theological issues involved in the discussion and some clarifications for a better understanding and mutual acceptance of the particular churches.

In "Vatican II and New Trends in Catechetics," Lorenzo Fernando examines the anthropological turning point of catechetics, the anthropological method advocated by Vatican II and also the post-Vatican catechetical trends in India which are expressed in a new vision and organization of the catechetical ministry, the formation of catechists, the composition of catechisms, the preparation of a national catechetical directory. Pearl Drego's "The Place and Role of Women in Church and Society in the Light of Vatican II" examines the status of women in the context of Council and twenty-five years after. She highlights the contribution of Vatican II to a new vision of women. She clearly points out the tasks for the future the Church in India to give a due share of responsibilities to women and thus form a new harmonious male and female community.

This book is worth reading to reflect on whether we are united to accept the challenges offered by these theologians for building a meaningful and relevant Indian Church.

Mohan JOSEPH, S.J.

The Philosophy of Right. By Antonio ROSMINI Vol I. The Essence of Right Pp xviii-216 £ 15 00, Vol II The Rights of the Individual, Pp xxii-596 £ 22 50 Durham, Rosmini House, 1993 ISBN 0-951-3211 7x and 8-8 (Available from Brewin Distribution Services, Doric House, Church St, Studley B80 7LG, UK)

In November 1988 *VJTR* introduced our readers to a new English edition of the works of Rosmini (pp 570-72), an important if somewhat neglected nineteenth-century priest and thinker, and a prolific writer specially on philosophy, whose beatification in the near future has been announced by the Vatican The collection has continued publication with commendable regularity since our initial review *The Principles of Ethics* in 1988, *Conscience* in 1989, *Certainty* and *Anthropology as an Aid to Moral Science* in 1991 In 1992 a small *Introduction to His Life and Teaching* by Denis Cleary was also published This year we have the first two of a projected six-volume edition of *The Philosophy of Right* The other volumes of this work will carry the titles *Universal Rights in Society* (III), *Rights in the Church* (IV), *Rights in the Family* (V) and *Rights in the State* (VI) Other works are also in preparation.

From the title and subtitles of the volumes presented or announced the importance for today of the topic stud-

sed in this work is clear. In the ongoing discussion on the Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* it may be of interest to have a clear understanding of how Church-sponsored philosophy studied the question of rights and natural law in the past. Rosmini places rights in the sphere of the our existence-with-others, affirms that rights are not granted by the State but belong to the person by reason of her or his birth or other titles, and relates rights to duties and therefore to themes of justice These emphases are essential to the modern discussion on the topic. The first volume, besides discussing the essence of rights, studies the principles to be followed for the derivation and determination of rights The second volume distinguishes connatural rights from acquired rights and makes an important affirmation that while ownership is in some way unlimited, the right of ownership is limited — a discussion which could have much relevance in the present controversy about Gatt and the Dunkel Draft[1]

The style is didactic, clear, slow in developing The book will interest students of post-Enlightenment thought

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J

Pastoral Questions

Christian Communication Reconsidered

By John BLUCK Geneva WCC Publications, 1989 Pp viii-75 $ 6.50 ISBN 2-8254-0975-8

Right from the dawn of civilization communication has played a vital role "Historically communication has determined the speed and direction of social change and hence formed the location of enormous power" (p 1) In our times satellites have revolutionised the communication networks all over the world. As a result, communication attracts heavy investment and in-depth research and becomes a specialization. The author has taken up a relevant subject for reflection and clearer understanding. The various topics have been studied with the theological insight and pastoral concern.

In the first three chapters the author situates and defines the subject with two different approaches to communication, i.e, the process school and the school of semiotics The author's contribution is to perceive communication from the point of view of the receiver. There are five aspects in communication, i e, source, message, channel, receiver and feedback (pp 10-18) Among these five, the role of the receiver has often been ignored or underplayed The author draws our attention to the centrality of the receiver in communication and its theological significance (pp. 15-16) This problem needs to be seen in the context of the electronic media

In the following two chapters the book analyses the role and relevance of rhetoric and homiletics The chapter on homiletics is rather elaborate (pp 32-43) Bluck has attempted to unearth the hidden potentials of homiletics The three dimensions of homiletics (proclamation, community, faith event) place this exercise above other forms of communication The author suggests concrete ways of enhancing the power of homiletics so that its uniqueness and impact are preserved

Chapter 6 looks critically at the media with special reference to Christian communication In Chapter 7 certain questions are raised regarding strategies for effective communication. In this chapter a comprehensive picture of various available media are presented with their advantages and disadvantages Chapter 8 serves as a conclusion including the convictions of Christian communicators If the purpose of Christian communication is evangelization, then the medium should not contradict the message (p 66) Hence one needs to seek consistency between message and medium. The Last Supper is a theology of communication.

This short book offers an excellent definition of Christian communication,

with all its intricacies and nuances. The readers are provided with diagrams to facilitate understanding and a lot of cross references. This helps further reading and reflection.

Thomas AMIRTHAM, S.J.

Overcoming the Threat of Death. A journal of one Christian's encounter with cancer. By Arie BROUWER. Geneva WCC Publications, 1993. Pp. xiii-105. $ 8.50. ISBN 2-8254-1125-6

Arie Brouwer learnt that he had cancer on December 11, 1992 and died on October 7, 1993. This book is a selection from a diary he kept from December 20 to July 16. There are three appendices — homilies for Easter Sunday and All Saints Day 1992 and some reflections on ecumenical immobility.

I began reading these reflections of Brouwer's journey to death the evening I heard that a close friend also had cancer. So the reading has been accompanied by a desire to prepare myself to meet and be with this person.

Brouwer would be well known in the USA and WCC circles as he was general secretary of the Reformed Church, deputy general secretary of the WCC and general secretary of the US National Council of Churches (NCC).

What I found of particular interest was the liturgy he wrote for his funeral, his insights into the way his cancer clarified his understanding of God and suffering, the process to "finish" unfinished business in the realm of personal relationship and his "professional" life within the ecumenical movement, and his reflections on the personal causes of cancer, healing and faith.

The reality of cancer forced him to reassess the theology of suffering and God's will which often does damage to the image of God as love and needs to be placed into the history of God's fight with evil and his sufferings. I found myself challenged by the process of healing, completing and deepening personal relationship, as we are called to do this always and not only in the face of death.

His involvement in the ecumenical movement had very painful aspects and a sense of disillusionment. He sees the movement being strangled by the priority given to denominational interests, hierarchies clinging to authority, a false understanding of plurality and a concern for the "limits of diversity." He advocates that more ecclesial significance be given to ecumenical bodies/councils and to worship.

His funeral liturgy is so structured that the various phases in the celebration of a person's life are attended to and integrated centring in the Spirit — Mourning — Affirmation of Faith — Celebration of the life of the person — Envisioning the homecoming — committing the body to the earth.

I judge not only women and men with terminal illness will profit, but family and friends of the terminally ill and also Christians concerned about the health of the ecumenical movement.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

New Vigor for the Church. Conversations on the Global Challenges of Our Time. By Peter-Hans KOLVENBACH, S.J. in dialogue with Louisa BLAIR and Robert CHODOS. Toronto: Compass — A Jesuit Journal, 1993. Pp. x-49. N.p. ISBN 0-9697947-0-3

This interview with the Superior General of the Jesuits took place when he was attending an International Jesuit Workshop on Indigenous Peoples during the International Year of Indigenous People (1993) in Ontario (Canada) (see *VJTR*, March 1994, p. 165f). Various areas are covered in the interview. I found insightful Kolvenbach's reflection on the resources of native culture, their contribution to the Church, the Jesuit ways of working with these peoples, the Jesuit priorities for this work, inculturation and evangelization, cross cultural union rather than unity in the Church, understanding the pastoral/theological mistakes of the past, and be-

ing aware that future generations will ask *why*? *how*? about the present generation's ways of acting. With clarity and candour he also deals with the interrelated realities of charity, justice and liberation and the history of the official Church's acceptance of liberation The book includes Kolvenbach's homily given at Wikwemikong, a town where Jesuits began working among the very poor Indians in 1844 and protected the native way of life. He purposefully and critically reflects on the work done and the wisdom we have today which would demand different approaches. Kolvenbach is honest and clear, and shows a great flexibility within a strong vision of faith which has to be embodied in justice

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Book Notices

We list a number of recent publication in Hindi and English from the *Development Education Series* Delhi· Navdin Prakashan Kendra (ISPCK), 1993

Participation in Suffering and Struggling By Rev V K Nuh Pp 47 Rs 10 ISBN 81-721-162-9

Aware of the Church's contribution to past struggles in India — national and moral — the author judges that too many Christians now sit and watch The book contains short reflections on aspects of struggles in India and participation in them

Moral Development and Education. By Henry O Thompson and Joyce E Thompson Pp 81 Rs 25 ISBN 81-7214-167-X

The three essays printed here (*Moral Development, Variation and Challenge* and *Implications and Education*) are based on the writings of Lawrence Kohlberg about moral development The authors summarize his thought, critique it at times and select aspects they judge pertinent They stress the importance of moral development (stages and levels) within education not only for students but for teachers and administrators To have an overview of a famous thinker on an important area available at a reasonable price is a value to readers who may thus be allured to read Kohlberg and also to learn about their own moral development.

Shital ki bholu. By Mary Prasad Pp 18 Rs 4.50 ISBN 81-7214-102-5

This is a short story of a young girl and her dog which was stolen. Interesting reading for young people

Jine ki rah. By Annie Roberts. Pp 74 Rs 6 ISBN 81-7214-103-3

This is a collection of stories by a writer who has published a lot of short stories in papers and magazines. These have the purpose to guide us in the journey of life.

Pollution. By Jude D'Souza. Pp 28 Rs 5 ISBN 81-7214-107-6

This booklet is informative Pollution and the protection of the environment are major issues in India and especially for Delhiites Pollution/Environment become now major concerns of Eco-Theology

---

Iswar ki aur. By Fr R.H. Lesser. Allahabad. St Paul Prakashan, 1989 Pp 80 and 187 Rs 10 and 20 ISBN 81-7109-062-1

These are catechetical books for youth The first is for children The second is for youth to prepare them for the sacraments of the Eucharist, Reconciliation

and Confirmation and for family catechesis of an initial nature. Young people will be helped to understand and live their faith.

Gungon ki awaz. (Yuva Dalit Lekhakon ki Rachnaen. By J.H. ANAND. Delhi. ISPCK, 1993. Pp. 116. Rs 20. ISBN 81-7214-136-X.

This book, voice of the voiceless An Anthology of Dalit Literature has been published to honour Rev Dr. James Massey on his 50th birthday A curriculum vitae and a list of his publications is added The books contains poems, stories and some studies by Dalit writers from different parts of the country. The book is related to the Akhil Bharatiya Dalit Lekhak Congress which was held in Delhi in 1993 James Massey deserves to be honoured for what he does and is and the book makes available the attitudes, experiences and thoughts of the Dalit communities

Father Constant Lievens aur Chotanagpur (1885-1892). By Mahali Livinus TIRKEY Ranchi Ranchi Salesian Publisher, 1993 (1985) Pp 153

The continued importance of Lievens for the Church and people of Chotanagpur justifies a second enlarged edition of Livinus Tirkey's study He has added some maps, especially a map of villages in Barway visited on Lieven's last "Tour" He has enlarged the text using also material available in the Vidyajyoti library archives A good book for parish libraries where there are communities of Christians from Chotanagpur

Aroma of Christ. By M J JOSEPH Madras CLS, 1993 Pp viii-44 Rs 15

This is a collection of meditations written in the Holy Land in the form of poems. The thought is related to life as lived day by day and deals with challenges to authentic human and Christian living

The Coward. (A Novelette) By J H ANAND Madras CLS, 1993 Pp 72 Rs 22

This is a love story with a sad interval A young and decorated soldier, in love with a wealthy girl who is lame is ashamed for a mixture of reasons to marry her She is killed in a Pakistani bombing raid on Dimapur which enrages him yet all his subsequent bravery leaves the mark of a coward on him

Women's Concerns in Asia. By Franklyn J BALASUNDARAM Madras CLS, 1993 Pp 41 Rs 20

This booklet arose from an optional course on *Christian Attitudes to the Role of Women* and a paper given at a Faculty Research Seminar at UTC The author initially sketches with clarity and precision the major characteristics of women's situation in Asia The rest of the booklet is a study of various areas of women's concern based on the writings of some Asian women theologians Aruna Gnanadason, Sun Ai Park, Bernadeen Silva and Sr Mary John Mananzan. Some areas sketched are the negative aspects. women victims of feudalism, patriarchy, capitalism, militarism, Church/Christian religion Positive thoughts women's ordination, spirituality, women and Jesus, mission, resurrection The book will introduce readers to an important dimension of all theological thinking which has so many pastoral implications.

Marriage. The Work of God in Two Stages. Shillong: Pastoral Centre, 1993 Pp 32

This is an extract on the Sacrament of Marriage from the supplementary volume to *Word of God*, a series of commentaries published to help catechists in the North East (see *VJTR* 1987 589) The booklet has much useful catechetical information. However a major change ought to have been made the — the book uses male language throughout — in Bible texts and commentary

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Vol. LVIII JUNE 1994 No. 6

VJTR 58(1994) 337-388

The Galileo Episode Revisited

Job KOZHAMTHADAM, S.J.

The Galileo affair was in the news a couple of years ago on the occasion of the Vatican recognition of the mistakes made in the case In the light of the Roman declarations at the time, this paper studies the history of the conflict and summarises the findings of the Pontifical Commission which studied it In the opinion of the author who teaches philosophy of science at the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, the theologians involved in the conflict failed to distinguish between the scriptural truth and the modes in which it is clothed, while the scientist Galileo failed also to distinguish between the scientific findings and the philosophical explanations he gave to them Dr Kozhamthadam resides in De Nobili College, Pune 411 014

In the past science and Christianity were presented as two incompatible forces constantly at war with each other by well-known publications like A.D. White's *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom.*[1] Even today this image is not uncommon in popular and even professional circles. However, contemporary research in the history and philosophy of science is gradually making it clear that science and Christianity need never have been enemies. Several scholars like Whitehead have argued that Christianity was instrumental in the creation of modern science in significant ways. According to them, not only did Christianity create the climate conducive to the emergence and development of modern science, but several Church leaders actively supported the new-born science. Several of the founders of modern science, Copernicus, Kepler, Descartes, Galileo, Mersenne, Newton, etc., were good practicing Christians[2] who found no real incompatibility between their

[1]New York. Dover Publications, 1960

[2]It is true that most of these theistic scientists had serious differences with

life as scientists and as believers.

The conflict between Galileo and Roman Catholicism is a dark chapter in the history of the interaction between science and religion. Over the centuries this episode — its nature, causes, and consequences — has been a topic of heated controversy. No one can deny that the official Church of Galileo's day made mistakes and blundered in handling the issue, but it is not at all certain that Galileo can be exonerated from all responsibility. Although the vast majority of secular historians and philosophers of science seem to put all the blame on the official Church, there are some, especially in recent times, who argue that Galileo must share part of the blame. Controversy has been a constant companion of Galileo, not only during his lifetime, but also afterwards, down to our own days. To settle the controversy once and for all and to dispel any lingering doubt concerning the compatibility of science and Catholicism, Pope John Paul II on November 10, 1979, expressed the hope that

> theologians, scientists, and historians, in a spirit of sincere collaboration, conduct a thorough examination of the Galileo case and, while frankly acknowledging the wrongs done by whatever party, dissipate the mistrust which that case still rouses in many minds regarding the possibility of a fruitful harmony of science and faith, Church and world.[3]

A Commission was established on July 3, 1981 for the study of the Ptolemaic-Copernican controversy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Pope extended his wholehearted support to this venture: "I give my unreserved support to this undertaking which will do honour to the truth both of faith and of science and open the door to future cooperation."[4] The Pontifical Commission opened up new avenues not only in theology but also in the interrelationship between science and religion. As Cardinal Poupard, Coordinator of the Commission, stated, the purpose of the project was not "a retrial," but "undertaking a calm and objective reflection, taking into account the historical and cultural context."[5] The study wanted

certain doctrines and practices of their Christian denominations. But they remained deeply committed to their religion as they understood it.

[3] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 71(1979), pp. 1464-1465, tr. in *The Pope Speaks*, 25(1980), p. 106.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Address of His Eminence Cardinal Paul POUPARD at the conclusion of the Proceedings of the Pontifical Study Commission on the Ptolemaic-Copernican

> to reply to the expectations of the world of science and culture regarding the Galileo question, to rethink this whole question, with complete fidelity to established historical facts and in conformity with the teachings and the culture of the times, and to recognize honestly, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, the rights and the wrongs, regardless of their source [6]

At the completion of these proceedings Cardinal Paul Poupard presented a brief summary of the main findings in an address on October 31, 1992. On this occasion Pope John Paul II also gave a very important speech to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences This paper is an attempt to capture some of the salient points of these two important pronouncements and place them in their scientific, philosophical, and historical perspective

Vatican II on Science and Religion

The re-examination of the Galilean case was done in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, which both set the stage for such an important investigation and provided the spirit that animated its proceedings The decision to carry out such a project was also inspired by this Council as several participants had expressed this desire.[7] Hence it may be enlightening to discuss the view of this Council, on science and on the relation of science to religion in general and Christianity in particular

The Council approached modern science and scientific developments with seriousness and genuine respect, showing a great sensitivity to the all-pervasive role contemporary science plays in the lives of present-day humans. Furthermore, it addressed the crucial issue of the interrelationship between science and Christianity. The Council affirmed in clear terms the autonomy and independence of every discipline, especially science.

> If by the autonomy of earthly affairs we mean that created things and societies themselves enjoy their own laws and values which must be gradually deciphered, put to use, and regulated by humanity, then it is entirely right to demand that autonomy. Such is not merely required by modern people, but it also harmonizes

Controversy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 31 October, 1992, no 1. The text is given in *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 4, 1992, p. 8.

[6]*Ibid*

[7]See *Gaudium et Spes*, no 36, note 99, *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott, S.J London. Geoffrey Chapman, 1967, p 234.

with the will of the Creator. For by the very circumstances of their having been created, all things are endowed with their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws, and order This sacred Synod, therefore, recalling the teaching of the First Vatican Council, declares that there are 'two orders of knowledge' which are distinct, namely, faith and reason It declares that the Church does not indeed forbid that 'when the human arts and sciences are practiced they use their own principles and their proper method, each in its own domain' Hence 'acknowledging this just liberty', this sacred Synod affirms the legitimate autonomy of human culture and especially of the sciences [8]

Far from seeing any tension between science and religion, the Council sees a common ancestry and destiny, a common origin and a common goal:

> Therefore, if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith For earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God Indeed, whoever labours to penetrate the secrets of reality with a humble and steady mind, is, even unawares, being led by the hand of God, who holds all things in existence, and gives them their identity [9]

The Council is not too naive to be oblivious of the difficulties involved in the interaction between science and Christianity According to it, "these difficulties do not necessarily harm the life of faith Indeed they can stimulate the mind to a more accurate and penetrating grasp of one's faith. For recent studies and findings of science, history, and philosophy raise new questions which influence life and demand new theological investigations "[10]

To the pessimistic critics of the Church, who hold that the Church is ever suspicious of science and never appreciative of its richness and beneficial effects, the Council responds with a very positive appreciation·

> Hence the culture today possesses particular characteristics For example, the so-called exact sciences sharpen critical judgment to a very fine edge Recent psychological research explains human activity more profoundly Historical studies make a signal contribution to bringing people to see things in their changeable and evolving aspects [11]

---

[8] *Gaudium et Spes*, nos 36 and 59

[9] *Ibid.*, no 36

[10] *Ibid.*, no 62

[11] *Ibid.*, no. 54

The Council brings out the pastoral dimension of contemporary science, urging the pastors to make use of the findings of science in their ministry: "In pastoral care, appropriate use must be made not only of theological principles, but also of the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology. Thus the faithful can be brought to live the faith in a more thorough and mature way."[12]

The Council concludes its discussion on the importance of science with an invitation to the faithful to integrate the various elements of our culture, especially science, with their religious life

> May the faithful, therefore, live in very close union with the people of their time . Let them blend modern science and its theories and the understanding of the most recent discoveries with Christian morality and doctrine Thus their religious practice and morality can keep pace with their scientific knowledge and with an ever-advancing technology Thus too they will be able to test and interpret all things in a truly Christian spirit[13]

It was this spirit of openness, concern for truth and objectivity, and a humble acceptance of failures, that animated the various studies on the Galileo case.

Some Important Ideas of John Paul II and Cardinal Poupard

Need for the Re-examination

The purpose of the decade-long proceedings was not to enact a retrial of the case, nor was it to rehabilitate Galileo and Copernicanism — this was done long ago. The purpose was not only to set the records straight in an objective and dispassionate way and to dispel any lingering misapprehension about the attitude of the Church towards science. The purpose was also to learn constructively from a past mistake so as to forestall its recurrence in the future In the words of the Pope,

> the underlying problems of this case concern both the nature of science and the message of faith It is therefore not to be excluded that one day we shall find ourselves in a similar situation, one which will require both sides to have an informed awareness of

[12]*Ibid.*, no 62
[13]*Ibid*, no. 62.

the field and of the limits of their own competencies.[14]

The spirit of Vatican II, with its openness, realism, and flexibility, has put the Church in a mood conducive to such learning from its mistakes.

The Complex Character of the Galileo Controversy

The address of Cardinal Poupard introduces and complements the Pope's speech. The Pope was talking to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences assembled to discuss the problem of "The Emergence of Complexity in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology." Right in the beginning he made a clear effort to connect this problem with the Galileo episode. Complexity implies that reality has many facets, and hence an adequate understanding of reality demands a comprehensive approach, which involves an analysis based on many models. Obviously, the recognition and acceptance of the complexity of natural phenomena discourages any single model approach. Galileo lived in an age "when a univocal model of order seemed to be obvious."[15] It seems to me that the implication is that the Galileo controversy arose because both the parties, Galileo and the Church authorities, failed to gauge accurately the complexity of the problem and attempted to solve a complex problem on the basis of a univocal model Hence in the re-examination of the case the Pope called for a broad-based, multifaceted approach. Cardinal Poupard's address says that four different working groups were constituted to study the scriptural, the cultural, the scientific and epistemological, and the historical and juridical aspects of the question.[16] It seems to me that this approach was the right one Both parties of the controversy had subscribed to a univocal model and, convinced in good faith that their respective models were the only right ones, refused to compromise This inflexible stand resulted in tragic consequences for all concerned.

---

[14]Speech of His Holiness Pope JOHN PAUL II to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 31 October 1992, no 4 The text is given in *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 4, 1992, pp 1-2

[15]*Ibid.*, no. 2

[16]See Address of Cardinal POUPARD, no. 1

A Twofold Question of the Galileo Case

One clear manifestation of the complexity of the issue is that it involves a twofold question: the scientific-epistemological and the pastoral. Many scholars in the past failed to take this double dimension seriously and ended up with wrong or biased conclusions. Both aspects are vital to the issue: the scientific dimension is important because Galileo was a scientist and an important scientific theory was at the centre of the storm; the pastoral dimension is important because the Church was the other party and pastoral care is one of its prime concerns. When due attention is given to both these aspects a more balanced view of the controversy is bound to emerge.

The scientific-epistemological aspect concerns biblical hermeneutics. In this context the Pope considers two important points, one that refers to Galileo and the other to the theologians. The first point concerns an important distinction between the purely scientific part and the philosophical part. Galileo was insensitive to this distinction: "Like most of his adversaries, Galileo made no distinction between the scientific approach to natural phenomena and a reflection on nature, of the philosophical order, which that approach generally calls for."[17] In other words, Galileo's science was justified, but his philosophy of science was unjustified[18] As far as science is concerned, if a hypothesis is justified by the experimental method, it is acceptable. But philosophy of science points out that such a method does not guarantee certainty, it can only give high probability. The experimentally backed scientific theory need not yield certainty, it often gives only high probability. Galileo went wrong because of his failure to consider this point and affirmed the Copernican theory as a fact without sufficient evidence. "He rejected the suggestion made to him to present the Copernican system as an hypothesis, in as much as it had not been confirmed by irrefutable proof."[19]

The second point concerns a distinction between what is said in the Bible and how it is said, the fundamental message of the Bible and the medium of communication. The theologians

[17]Speech of JOHN PAUL II, no. 5.

[18]It may be noted that Galileo subscribed to the Aristotelian understanding of science, according to which scientific knowledge meant fully certain and immutable knowledge. Modern science makes a moderate claim of highly probable knowledge only

[19]Speech of JOHN PAUL II, no 5

failed to note that Scripture was written for the ordinary people and in a language intelligible to them. Hence it makes use of models and theories commonly accepted and understood by the people. Such models and theories are mutable and should not be equated with the fundamental message, which is for all times. The scriptural style and mode of communication are culturally conditioned, whereas God's revelation itself is transcultural. Hence one needs to distinguish between what belongs to culture and what belongs to the fundamental message Since science is an integral part of culture, the scientific models and theories used in the Bible belong to the mutable constituent The theologians failed to make this important distinction

> The geocentric representation of the world was commonly admitted in the culture of the time as fully agreeing with the teaching of the Bible, of which certain expressions, taken literally, seemed to affirm geocentrism The problem posed by theologians of that age was, therefore, that of the compatibility between heliocentrism and Scripture [20]

The theologians went wrong because they failed to pay close attention to the challenges of the new science and examine their own criteria of Scriptural interpretation As the Pope clearly states, "the majority of theologians did not recognize *the formal distinction between Sacred Scripture and its interpretation*, and this led them unduly to transpose into the realm of the doctrine of the faith a question which in fact pertained to scientific investigation "[21] This discussion of the Pope emphasizes that both sides should share the blame for the tragedy that happened in 1616 and 1633 The situation was too complex to have just one perpetrator of the mess

The second aspect of the question, the pastoral care of the Church, is an often forgotten point in the discussion of the Galileo case, especially by secular scholars The Pope states.

> By virtue of her own mission, the Church has the duty to be attentive to the pastoral consequences of her teaching Before all else, let it be clear that this teaching must correspond to the truth But it is a question of knowing how to judge a new scientific datum when it seems to contradict the truths of faith The pastoral judgment which the Copernican theory required was difficult to make, insofar as geocentrism seemed to be a part of scriptural teaching itself [22]

[20] *Ibid.*, no 5
[21] *Ibid.*, no. 9
[22] *Ibid.*, no. 7

This pastoral dimension is crucial for a fair and balanced understanding of the Galileo episode, although it should not be used to exonerate the Church authorities from their mistakes.

Concern for pastoral care means that the Church has to be sensitive to the sentiments and feelings of the people. New ideas can often have an unsettling effect on people and society and so caution and prudence will have to be used in the transmission of such ideas. At times it may be necessary to prepare people to receive radically new ideas, and proceed slowly and gradually.

The Pope here is calling attention to the different pace with which different segments of society are able to understand, accept, and absorb new scientific ideas. The scientific society may accept it at a fast pace, but the masses, or society at large, move slowly. The Church has to be sensitive to the slow pace of society It has been pointed out by scholars that Galileo developed his strategy and chose his techniques with a view to their mass appeal For instance, he wrote in the vernacular, unlike his contemporary scientists who wrote in Latin. He gave well-advertized public demonstrations of his telescopic discoveries, often to influential personalities, but non-scientists. Since he was appealing to the common people, Galileo had a duty to pay attention to the pace at which they could absorb his ideas and to the consequences these ideas suggested to the people.

Sensitivity to pastoral care does not mean that the pastor becomes too protective and too cautious to tolerate new ideas. The pastor should serve as a catalyst in the growth process of the people to enable them to move with the times. He has to be bold and open-minded and encourage new ideas: "Let us say, in a general way, that the pastor ought to show genuine boldness, avoiding the double trap of a hesitant attitude and of hasty judgment, both of which can cause considerable harm."[23] There is good reason to believe that at the time of Galileo most pastors lacked this boldness.

Reasons for Galileo's Condemnation

Both the Pope and the Cardinal are very fair and balanced in their evaluation of the causes that led to the condemnation of Galileo. No attempt is made to justify the Church or excuse it from blame, nor do they try to put all the blame on Galileo and his supporters. In fact, both point out that all the parties con-

[23] *Ibid.*, no 7

cerned had a share of responsibility in the tragedy. Cardinal Poupard thinks that all the participants acted in good faith and deserve to be granted the benefit of the doubt: "In conclusion, a rereading of the archival documents shows once more that all those involved in the trial, without exception, have a right to the benefit of good faith, in the absence of extra-procedural documents showing the contrary."[24]

Cardinal Poupard adduces a number of reasons for the condemnation. "The philosophical and theological qualifications wrongly granted to the then new theories about the centrality of the sun and the movement of the earth were the result of a *transitional situation* in the field of astronomical knowledge, and of an exegetical *confusion* regarding cosmology."[25]

Science in general and astronomy in particular were passing through a period of revolutionary changes at the time. Galileo was born in 1564, only twenty-one years after the publication of Copernicus's book *De Revolutionibus*. Even before the publication of this epoch-making book, the world of astronomy was in a state of confusion and uncertainty because of serious failures of the age-old Ptolemaic system. In a way, the Copernican contribution only added to the confusion, especially in the first several decades of its arrival. There were at least three very distinct systems of the universe: the Ptolemaic system, which enjoyed a remarkable track record for about 1500 years, especially with regard to accuracy of prediction, the system of Tycho Brahe, discovered and developed by the observational genius of the century, and the Copernican system, supported by geniuses like Kepler and Galileo. These were vying with each other, each claiming to be the true theory of the universe.

Even for professional astronomers it was very difficult, if not impossible, to choose between the different contenders because each had certain merits which the others lacked. It is true that in course of time the Copernican system won out and was shown to be the true system. But at the time of Galileo the Copernican theory was by no means the unanimous choice of professional astronomers. Many text books, including certain books on astronomy, even today give the impression that at the time of Galileo the truth of the Copernican system was established and only blind fools and fanatic religious diehards would

[24] Address of Cardinal POUPARD, no. 5

[25] *Ibid.* no. 5

have challenged it Such statements are based on the "Galileo myth" rather than on historical data. Galileo did try to give empirical proof to justify the Copernican theory, but, as we shall see, his attempts at the time fell far short of the target. The real compelling scientific evidence for Copernicanism had *to wait over a century after Galileo's death.*

According to Poupard, the contemporaries of Galileo, especially the Church authorities, trapped in the turmoil and confusion of this period, failed to make the right discernment:

> It is in that historical and cultural framework, far removed from our own times, that Galileo's judges, incapable of dissociating faith from an age-old cosmology, believed, quite wrongly, that the adoption of the Copernican revolution, in fact not yet definitely proven, was such as to undermine Catholic tradition, and that it was their duty to forbid its being taught This subjective error of judgment, so clear to us today, led them to a disciplinary measure from which Galileo 'had much to suffer' These mistakes must be frankly recognized [26]

The Pope believes that the peculiar character of the age Galileo lived in was also responsible for the tragedy. Galileo's age subscribed to a "unitary character of culture," which believed in a "univocal model of order." Explaining this point the Pope says. "The cultural horizon of Galileo's age was uniform and carried the imprint of a particular philosophical formation."[27] In such a culture plurality of perspectives and opinions was either suppressed or minimally tolerated. New systems were watched with suspicion One consequence of this narrow perspective was that it led to a literal understanding of Scripture. It refused to recognize the formal distinction between Sacred Scripture and its interpretation

This state of affairs exposed the weakness and unpreparedness of the theologians of the day. With better preparedness and more openness the theologians could have helped avert the mistake because the Catholic tradition did make room for distinguishing between Sacred Scripture and its interpretation. Both the Pope and the Cardinal refer to Bellarmine's stand on the matter, which was cautious but balanced. According to Bellarmine,

> whenever a true demonstration [i e., proof beyond all reasonable doubt] would be produced that the sun stands in the centre of the world and the earth in the third heaven, and that the sun does not

[26]*Ibid.*, no. 5.
[27]Speech of JOHN PAUL, no 9.

rotate around the earth but the earth around the sun, then at that time it would be necessary to proceed with great caution in interpreting the Scriptures which seem to be contrary, and it would be better to say that we do not understand them then to say that what has been demonstrated is false.[28]

It may be asked, since Bellarmine himself was involved in the first trial, why did he not apply this principle and acquit Galileo? The answer to this question is well-known: Bellarmine believed, with good justification, that Galileo had not demonstrated the truth of heliocentrism, i.e., had not given irrefutable evidence for it.

The principle enunciated by Bellarmine was nothing new. St Augustine had gone even further in cautioning against too literal an interpretation of Scripture. As he put it,

> If it happens that the authority of Sacred Scripture is set in opposition to clear and certain reasoning, thus must mean that the person who *interprets Scripture* does not understand it correctly It is not the meaning of Scripture which is opposed to the truth, but the meaning which he has wanted to give to it That which is opposed to Scripture is not what is in Scripture but what he has placed there himself, believing that this is what Scripture meant[29]

St Thomas Aquinas also held a similar view If the theologians of the day paid heed to these views, the history of the Galileo controversy would have been different. It may also be noted that in Galileo's time there were several theologians, such as Pereyra,[30] Foscarini,[31] etc., who advocated views similar to those of Augustine and Aquinas But their number was small and they were drowned in the flood of opposing theologians.

Copernicanism and Scientific Evidence

Even today some textbooks and popular books on the history of science give the impression that Galileo had given con-

[28] "Bellarmine's Letter to Foscarini on April 12, 1615," in Richard BLACKWELL, *Galileo, Bellarmine, and the Bible* Notre Dame University of Notre Dame Press, 1991, p. 266.

[29] Cf Speech of JOHN PAUL II, no. 9, quoting Epistula 147, n.3, *PL* 33, col. 588.

[30] The Spanish Jesuit Benito Pereyra (1535-1610) was considered the most prominent Biblical exegete at the end of the sixteenth century. He was an expert on the Book of Genesis. The interpretative principles he gave were remarkably modern. See BLACKWELL, *op cit* , pp. 20-22.

[31] Paolo Antonio Foscarini was a native of Montaltro Uffugo in Calabria. He was a Carmelite priest and theologian, was twice appointed Provincial of the Carmelite Order in Calabria. His *Letters* attempts to show that Copernicanism is not contrary to the Bible and that the well-known controversial passages can be interpreted in terms of heliocentrism without going against the Catholic faith.

vincing scientific or empirical evidence to establish his view. However, the fact of the matter is that even his best supporters are forced to admit that he simply did not have at the time any irrefutable proof for heliocentrism. It must be noted that the Copernican system espoused by Galileo was the original "crude" version presented by Copernicus, not the refined one we have today, thanks to the outstanding work done by Kepler and other astronomers. The original version was far from perfect and was beset with many problems. As Thomas Kuhn, for instance, points out, "Most of the essential elements by which we know the Copernican Revolution — easy and accurate computation of planetary positions, the abolition of epicycles and eccentrics, the dissolution of the spheres, the sun a star, the infinite expansion of the universe — these and many others are not to be found anywhere in Copernicus' work."[32] In fact, Kuhn sees very little revolution in the *De Revolutionibus:*

> In every respect except the earth's motion the *De Revolutionibus* seems more closely akin to the works of ancient and medieval astronomers and cosmologists than to the writings of the succeeding generations who based their works upon Copernicus' and who made explicit the radical consequences that even its author had not seen in his work.[33]

Langford and other scholars point out that "this new system [the Copernican system] was far from the 'obvious improvement' some historians have held it to be. Because of the spurious preface, the epicycles, and the lack of an acceptable physics, this system, while it did have a number of supporters through the years, was still considered an inferior hypothesis at the time of Galileo."[34] In a recent paper William Carroll remarks:

> But Galileo did not prove that the earth moves about the sun. In fact, Galileo and the theologians of the Inquisition accepted the prevailing Aristotelian ideal of scientific demonstration which required that science be sure and certain knowledge in terms of necessary causes, not the conclusion of hypothetical or probabilistic reasoning which today we tend to accept as science .. Galileo did not think that his astronomical observations provided sufficient evidence to prove that the Earth moves, although he did think that they called into question the truth of Ptolemaic astronomy.[35]

---

[32]Thomas Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957, p. 135.

[33]*Ibid.*

[34]Jerome [James R.] Langford, *Galileo, Science, and the Church.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966, p. 37

The Copernican system defended by Galileo suffered from serious scientific and philosophical problems. On the other hand, the Copernican system as developed by Johannes Kepler had overcome many of these difficulties, but Galileo paid scant attention to Kepler's work. Undoubtedly the Copernican system was simpler and more unified than all its competitors. It was quite accurate in predicting the time and position of astronomical phenomena. But the Ptolemaic system, especially as modified by Peurbach, was equally accurate In fact, some scholars argue that Peurbach's version gave more accurate predictions. Perhaps the most embarrassing feature of the Copernican system was that it retained the unreal epicycles and hence left serious doubts about its claim to be representing the real state of the universe In this connection it is most surprising that Galileo not only accepted the epicycles, but also argued for their reality.[36] To prince Cesi, who criticized the presence of epicycles, Galileo wrote a firm reply on June 30, 1612.

> We should not desire that Nature should adjust to that which seems to be best arranged and ordered, but we ought rather to adjust our intellect to her works, since they are certainly most perfect and admirable, and all other constructions would reveal themselves eventually as devoid of elegance, incongruous, and puerile If anyone wants to deny the epicycles, he must deny the paths of the satellites of Jupiter Eccentrics exist, for what else is the path of Mars according to the best observations?[37]

This is all the more surprising because Kepler had already ten years earlier banished these discredited epicycles from Copernican astronomy [38]

Perhaps one of the most serious objections to heliocentrism came from the failure of astronomers to observe any stellar parallax According to the phenomenon of parallax, if the earth is moving around the sun, than a "fixed star" should show a shift

---

[35] William CARROLL, "*Eppur si muove* The Legend of Galileo," *FCS Newsletter*, March 1993, pp 7-9

[36] There is documentary evidence for this. See *Galileo's Letter to Dini*, on March 1615, in BLACKWELL, *op cit*, p 210

[37] Giorgio DE SANTILLANA, *The Crime of Galileo* Chicago The University of Chicago Press, 1961, p 36.

[38] One may point out that what Galileo meant by epicycles was the type of circular path traversed by the satellites of Jupiter But his critics were talking about the controversial and complicated Ptolemaic epicycles that were rampant in Copernican astronomy Galileo certainly must have understood what prince Cesi and others were referring to

in its position when observed from the earth from two points of its orbit separated by a long distance. No such shift was noticed, not even by Tycho Brahe, the best observational astronomer of the century. In fact, this was Tycho's most important reason for rejecting Copernicanism and proposing his own alternative. Copernicus attempted to explain away this objection by arguing that parallax was not observed because the distance of the star from the earth was so large as to render the shift imperceptible. Galileo went along with this evasive answer, but Kepler, despite his immense respect for Copernicus, refused to be satisfied with this explanation It may be noted that the stellar parallax was observed only in 1838 by the German astronomer Bessell, almost two centuries after the death of Galileo!

This problem of the stellar parallax was a nagging one because it was created by heliocentrism — if the earth did not move around the sun, there would be no parallax — and heliocentrism was helpless to tackle this problem at the time of Galileo There were many other scientific problems afflicting the Copernican system.

Galileo's Empirical Evidence and its Inadequacy

Although both Kepler and Galileo accepted and supported the Copernican theory wholeheartedly and unconditionally, they followed markedly different approaches for strengthening the theory Kepler was not happy with the theory as presented by his master and so continuously worked to improve it. Galileo seemed to have been quite satisfied with the theory and so strove to justify it empirically. Kepler's thrust was to reform Copernicanism, whereas Galileo's emphasis was to confirm it Kepler had cleared his version of heliocentrism of the unreal epicycles and the incorrect circular orbits, but Galileo retained all these But Galileo presented outstanding observational evidence to support the new theory Clearly, the brilliant contributions of both these giants were necessary for the emergence of the true theory of the solar system — their contributions were indeed complementary to each other. Very often Galileo is credited as the champion of Copernicanism. Historical facts demand that Kepler be given his just share in this honour.

The discovery that Jupiter has moons like the earth was Galileo's first piece of evidence in favour of heliocentrism. This observation could silence the objection of those who argued

against Copernicanism on the plea that it gave rise to a complex motion: the moon moves around the earth and the earth in turn moves around the sun. Galileo's discovery showed that there is nothing strange about this complex motion since other planets too have the same.

No doubt a remarkable feat in astronomy, the discovery of the moons of Jupiter could not be considered establishing the truth of Copernicanism. This discovery could also be looked upon as a strong evidence for the system of Brahe[39] since his system involved a similar arrangement of the planetary bodies.

The discovery of the phases of Venus was another piece of evidence presented by Galileo. Since it was known that the moon changed its apparent shape because it revolved around the earth, this discovery showed that Venus moved around the sun. However, this phenomenon also could equally well be accounted for in the Tychonic system. Hence it could not the Copernican system as the only correct one.

The discovery of the sun spots, Galileo thought, also established the heliocentric theory This discovery certainly dealt a serious blow to the old Aristotelian claim about the immutability of the heavens According to the discovery, spots could be seen to pass over the face of the sun in such a way that it described an arc titled sometimes upward, sometimes downward. Galileo argued that this came about because the sun's axis was inclined to the ecliptic (i.e , the apparent annual path of the sun) and because we observe the spots from the earth moving from one side of the sun to the other However, this could not give any conclusive evidence for the mobility of the earth since such a rise and fall of the spots could happen in the geocentric world also in which the earth was stationary and the sun was moving Galileo's answer to this objection was that it would demand that the sun's axis remain always parallel to itself In that case it would be impossible to account for the continual variations in the tilt of the sun's axis necessary to cause the yearly variation in the path of the sunspot. Even this explanation failed to convince the critics, because here the argument was based on the claim that it was virtually impossible for one celestial body to revolve around another while its axis remained parallel to itself But in Galileo's heliocentrism, the earth's

[39]In Tycho's geoheliocentric system all the planets except the earth went around the sun, while the sun, in turn, went around the earth.

axis remains parallel to itself at a constant angle. If the earth can do it, why can't the sun do the same?

Galileo himself had admitted the inadequacy of the above discoveries to satisfy his opponents, but he seems to have sincerely believed that his explanation of the formation of the tides provided him with a "master-proof" to clinch the issue, as he asserted in the *Dialogues*. For Galileo the tides were produced because the double motion of the earth — the diurnal rotation and annual revolution — caused the sea and the land to move at different speeds.

The choice of the tide was, in a way, a clever move since, if correct, it could give a physical demonstration of the movement of the earth. The moving tides in various parts of the globe would have been a clear manifestation of an earth in constant motion. But Galileo's mind was too mechanical and his perspective too narrow to take into consideration factors other than the purely mechanical As in the case of the epicycles, here also Galileo's overconfidence led him to foolish blunders. In this case too Kepler was on the right track and Galileo tried foolishly to debunk the intuitive genius of Kepler. According to the German, the attraction of the moon had a decisive role to play in the formation of the tides the overconfident Italian dismissed Kepler's idea as an astrological superstition

The "master-proof" failed miserably According to it, there should be only one high tide, precisely at noon, in clear contradiction to the observed fact of two high tides daily, which shift around the clock

Galileo's outstanding telescopic discoveries certainly went a long way towards putting heliocentrism on a firm footing; but the evidences, as they stood at the time, were not only inadequate, but, in some cases, incorrect

The Crucial Scientific Evidence only long after Galileo's Death

Today we know that the Copernican theory is true and well-established But, although pieces of evidence continued to come in from the time of Galileo's astronomical discoveries, the crucial evidence came only almost one and a half centuries after Galileo's death. Cardinal Poupard makes a quick reference to some of these important discoveries.

The discovery of the phenomenon of aberration by the British astronomer Bradley in 1725 was an important step in establishing heliocentrism. Aberration is the apparent displacement of a star's real position due to the finiteness of the velocity of light and the movement of the earth. Since if the earth were stationary no such displacement would occur, the detection of this shift can show that the earth is moving. We have already seen the extreme significance of the detection of the stellar parallax for establishing Copernicanism. The stellar parallax was discovered only in 1838 by the German astronomer-mathematician Bessell. Foucault's pendulum[40] gave conclusive proof for the rotation of the earth in 1851 *Galileo was definitely right, but for reasons he could not deliver in his lifetime*

The late arrival of the conclusive evidence should in no way be considered a weakness of the Copernican theory It in no way renders this theory poor science, because this is the usual case with scientific theories They do not come out as finished products with a complete array of irrefutable proofs Often new creative theories gather evidence over a period of time and get well-established only gradually Galileo failed to understand this point, at least if we go by several statements and claims made by him [41]

The Condemnation of Galileo was Reformable and was Reformed

Both the Pope and the Cardinal clarify that the condemnation of Galileo was not an irreformable act Nor was it given *ex cathedra* by the Pope and so it did not involve the question of papal infallibility The Pope did approve the verdict of the Commission that condemned Galileo, but such an approval does not constitute an infallible act

That the condemnation was reformable is clear from history because as new evidence began coming in, Rome began changing its stand As Cardinal Poupard points out, "in 1741, in the face of the optical proof [the discovery of aberration] of the fact that the earth revolves round the sun, Benedict XIV had the

[40] A simple device that can show the rotation of the earth because the plane of the pendulum's rotation is seen to turn continuously The experiment was first performed by the French scientist Foucault in 1851

[41] "It must be admitted that there are instances where Galileo implied that the Copernican theory was not yet an established fact, but would be so in the future.

Holy Office grant an *imprimatur* to the first edition of the *Complete Works of Galileo*."[42] Again in 1757 the Sacred Congregation of the Index removed works favouring heliocentrism from its *Catalogue of Forbidden Books*. Another incident also affirms the point that the Galilean verdict was reformable. In 1820, Canon Settele, professor at the University of Rome *La Sapienza*, wanted to publish his book *Elements of Optics and Astronomy*. At that time Fr Anfossi, Master of the Sacred Palace, refused to grant the *imprimatur*. The author appealed to Pope Pius VII and his appeal received a favourable answer in 1822. It must be noted that all these events took place even before the discovery of the stellar parallax and the demonstration of Foucault's Pendulum.

Whom to Blame?

Although the two documents do not point the finger at any specific persons, they do hint at those who were primarily responsible for the mishandling of the case. According to Cardinal Poupard, "Galileo's judges," who were "incapable of dissociating faith from an age-old cosmology," must shoulder the primary responsibility. On the other hand, Pope John Paul II thinks that "the majority of theologians did not recognize the formal distinction between Sacred Scripture and its interpretation," and this failure of the theologians led to the confusion. It seems that the implication is that the Church depended on these supposedly competent persons, but unfortunately, for reasons beyond their control, they failed It may be noted that neither of the two documents puts the blame on the Pope or on the Church as a whole.

The Myth of the Galileo Case

One of the goals of the re-study of the Galileo case was to help explode the "myth" that has been built around Galileo, thanks mainly to the philosophers and historians of science of the Age of Enlightenment. According to this myth, science and Catholicism are irreconcilable enemies and the Galileo episode stands as the lasting monument of this enmity. "In this perspective, the Galileo case was the symbol of the Church's supposed rejection of scientific progress, or of 'dogmatic' obscurantism

[42]Address of Poupard, no 3

opposed to the free search for truth."[43] This myth has led some to believe in the existence of a "tragic mutual incomprehension" arising from a fundamental incompatibility between science and the Christian faith. The Pope hopes that "the clarifications furnished by recent historical studies enable us to state that this sad misunderstanding now belongs to the past."[44]

According to the Pope, there should be no such conflict between science and religion because both are needed for human development. This development involves a horizontal dimension and a vertical dimension Science supplies the horizontal and religion the vertical.

It seems to me that this myth is hard to crack. Some of the reactions to the final report of the Galileo case have only embellished the myth. *The New York Times* of October 31, 1992, for instance, used the heading. "After 350 Years, Vatican Says Galileo Was Right· It moves" *The Chicago Sun Times* was no different "Pope Says Galileo Was Right: Earth Moves Around the Sun." According to Allan Cowell of *The New York Times*, the Pope's address would rectify one of the Church's most infamous wrongs, "the persecution of the Italian astronomer and physicist for proving the earth moves about the sun" The reports given by these two respected newspapers are very inaccurate and misleading We have seen that the Vatican had said long ago that heliocentrism is right We have also seen that Galileo never succeeded in *proving* heliocentrism In fact, Galileo's best proof was a flop It is such reporting based on mythical stereotypes rather than actual data that creates and nurtures "the Galileo myth"

One of the reasons why such myths about Galileo persist is because scholars in the past often recounted only the story of Galileo's "martyrdom" His own mistakes and the part he played in the whole tragedy is either ignored or underplayed There is a real need to bring out both sides of the controversy. Reports of the type mentioned above make us wonder whether enough has been done to present a factual and balanced understanding of the Galileo episode[45]

---

[43] "Speech of John Paul II," no. 10.

[44] Ibid

[45] The author is at present working on such a project attempting to bring out both sides of the story

Some Reflections and Concluding Remarks

A Fine Gesture in the Right Direction

The Catholic Church now has officially owned up its responsibility in the tragedy, without denying the responsibility of the other party for the sad episode Though late, the Church has accepted its mistake and this is a commendable move because accepting one's mistakes in the absence of coercion from outside is a sign of strength rather than of weakness. Now it is in a better position to extend its hand for a positive and constructive dialogue with science. It is to be seen whether science will also rise to the occasion with a fine gesture of its own.

The Need for Philosophy and Theology Emphasized

The documents we have examined reveal that the source of the conflict could be traced to the failure of the scientists in their philosophy and the failure of the theologians in their science or interpretation of scientific findings. Galileo and his supporters failed to reflect on the philosophical implications of their scientific claim, the theologians failed to appreciate the theological implications of the new science. Philosophy forces the scientist to reflect on what he/she is doing. Some good reflection on his science and its claims would have kept Galileo's claims within reasonable bounds He failed to realize that demonstration (establishing irrefutably) of a theory requires more than a few pieces of evidence

The theologians failed to update their views so as to handle the new developments taking place at their doorsteps. In the words of the Pope, they failed to realize that "it is a duty for theologians to keep themselves regularly informed of scientific advances in order to examine, if such be necessary, whether or not there are reasons for taking them into account in their reflection or for introducing changes in their teaching."[46] The theologian's role is not just one of defending the Church from assault, but one of keeping the Church abreast with the developments all around through courageous thinking and creative insights. One of the lessons to be learned from the Galileo conflict is that the significance of philosophy and theology cannot be overlooked. Philosophy and theology are no empty intellec-

[46] "Speech of JOHN PAUL II," no 8

ual pastimes. Many an actual conflict could have been averted the persons concerned had care for clarity and accuracy through philosophical and theological reflection.

Mistaken Strategy?

A close look at the confrontation between Galileo and the Catholic Church reveals a curious state of affairs: both Galileo and the Church were weak exactly where one would expect them to be strong, and strong where one would expect them to be weak. Scientifically Galileo had a weak case and the Church a strong one, theologically the Church theologians had a weak case and Galileo a strong one. If the Church had focussed its attack on Galileo's deficient and even defective scientific evidence, history would have celebrated the Church as the guardian of scientific truth and a defendor of scientific exactness. Instead, the Church attacked Galileo on the interpretation of 'scientific' passages in the Bible, about which Galileo had a clear superiority. Perhaps one of the main mistakes of the Church was in its choice of the strategy for the attack. Had it been wiser and chosen the right strategy, we would have a totally different history of the relationship between science and the Catholic Church.

VJTR 58(1994) 359-368

Missionary Formation of the Religious

Towards a New Paradigm

Errol D'LIMA, S.J.

In the context of the coming Synod on Consecrated Life in October, the author, Professor of Theology at the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth (De Nobili College, Pune 411014), reflects on the history of religious life from monasticism to the Jesuit model and demands a formation adapted to our times, in an open community, with a social orientation, in contact with life and the world and based on a sound theology

In the wake of Vatican Council II, the meanings of the words 'missionary' and 'formation' have become quite perplexing. When the term 'missionary' was applied specifically to a person who would spearhead the founding and initial nurturing of a Christian community in virgin territory, it was easy to recognize who a missionary was Today, especially in the light of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) and *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), the term 'missionary' can be legitimately applied to any Christian who is engaged in developing human potential, or in transforming society, or in evangelizing communities that may be Catholic, Christian or non-Christian

In the past, and given the nature of the missionary's task, it was easy enough to decide on the type of 'formation' such a task would call for The missionary had to acquire skills to preach the gospel message to the non-Christian and nourish the newly-initiated with a Christian 'creed, code and cult'. Today, the understandings of the term 'formation' are legion. Not only must various goals in terms of which persons are formed be identified, but in the light of anthropology, psychology and sociology, formation is seen as a process which takes place and continues far beyond the confines of a seminary or a house of formation. In such a context, the task of a 'formator' is less easy to describe.

Against a backdrop of pluriform meanings linked with 'mission' and 'formation', it would be too ambitious to suggest a

single and fully worked-out model for missionary formation. Further, to assume that such a model would be uniformly applicable to men and women, to those preparing for the ordained and to other ministries, and to proclaimers of the word in every conceivable apostolate, appears questionable. Hence, instead of attempting to describe a model, I propose to treat of issues which should feature in present-day models of formation. I do this in the hope that a search is initiated by different groups of persons. The end-product may not be a fully-outlined model, but a discovery of the direction which formation should take.

The issues will be grouped in two sections. The first will deal with the challenge of religious life today, the second will itemize the elements and issues which should enter into today's models of religious formation

I. The Challenge in Religious Life Today

One searches the gospels in vain to uncover a juridical act by which Jesus instituted religious life. One does find Jesus proposing the evangelical counsels to his hearers as part of the proclamation of the Kingdom This proclamation contained a challenge to live a transformed life in the world according to the spirit of the evangelical counsels In the history of Christianity, individuals and groups have responded to this challenge and devised ways of life which articulated the gospel imperative Those who professed religious life must be seen — even prior to their institutional identity — as having responded to this challenge contained in the proclamation of Jesus

In the wake of Vatican II, religious orders and congregations have tried to reinterpret their charisms. New formation programmes have been tried out and changes in clothing and customs have been introduced But all these changes presuppose a specific and authentic understanding of the challenge to which today's religious hope to respond. In keeping with the response to this challenge, new support systems must be envisaged And by the same token, suitable formation programmes must be planned

A historical perspective of religious life through the centuries will help to uncover the challenge it embodied in the different periods of the Church's history, and the specific ways in which religious attempted to respond to it. In each period reli-

gious life emerged as the spontaneous response of Christian persons or groups to a challenge to live out the Christ life in their own way. In responding to it religious were seen as exercising a prophetic role in the Church and world.

Since, in the history of the Church, the first responses to the challenge were portrayed in monastic observance, we shall begin with an examination of monasticism.

Monasticism

Though foreshadowed by Anthony the Hermit (c. 251-356) and by Pachomius (c.290-c.346), monastic life in the West was mainly exemplified in the Benedictine Rule For Benedict (c.480-c 547), religious life was to be practised *in the monastery*.

The monastery was a territory carved out of the secular world, and sanctified by the presence of persons whose lives included prayer and the practice of asceticism. The monastery was a holy place where union with God could be sought and obtained. Formal prayer within the monastic walls sanctified the hours of the day, simplicity of life helped detachment, and the promise of stability ensured the continuity of a religious community. Such an understanding of religious life carried with it an implicit judgment on the world of the secular and, in contrast or opposition to this world, the monastery offered the suitable space for experiencing God's presence

The spirituality of the monastery focussed on the persons who lived within it Benedict did not think of the apostolate as an essential part of monastic spirituality. The world of the monastery in which salvation of the individual was sought was totally self-contained. Self-sufficiency in terms of spiritual and material goods became a goal in the monastery

The following of Jesus is the primary reason for becoming a religious, and, for Benedict it was within the monastery that such a following had to be pursued. Fixed hours of prayer were observed and one's relationship to others in the monastery was lived within the framework of silence. For the monk, the goings-on of everyday life were put aside in order to experience union with God in specially tailored surroundings. A tacit conclusion was soon drawn from such an understanding of monastic spirituality: persons normally lived their lives in the secular world; but if deeper union with God was sought, this should take place in the enclosed lifestyle which the monastery pro-

vided. The monastery was the oasis of God in the desert of life because it afforded the solitude and separation from others which were considered necessary conditions for experiencing God.

Interiority, the *lectio divina*, and a structured community were essential elements of the life within the monastery walls. If monks are considered as the original norm, then religious life must include seclusion and quiet for prayer. The prophetic sign of religious life (the response to the challenge) must be in the denial of worldly and secular values and in the espousal of a life given to prayer, the practice of the evangelical counsels and the living out of a common life under an abbot.

Monasticism and Apostolic Activity

By the thirteenth century, the services of the monk were enlisted by the Church for her spiritual ministrations. Already at the time of Gregory the Great (590-604) monks were sent to Kent (597) in England on a mission. It is not wrong to assume that monks did represent a spiritual presence in the Church; further, from their number many were chosen to be bishops. But while the monk would offer his services to the Church by way of preaching, celebration of the sacraments and even teaching, he would retain his monastic regimen. Dominic (1170-1221) exemplified this new way of life

Even though the dimension of the apostolate was added to life in the monastery, the monk still had fixed hours for prayer and led a common life under a superior. Apostolic work (the ecclesial ministry) made it imperative for the monk to go out of the monastery into the secular world which needed redemption. True, while preserving monastic observance the monk needed to be educated to carry out his apostolic work. But such a need did not result in monasticism being restructured and reinterpreted. Dominic is credited with establishing the first apostolic order (1216-1217) where monastic spirituality was accompanied by a concern for the apostolate. Dominic began with a group of followers in the diocese of Toulose where he was entrusted with preaching and defending the faith especially against those who espoused the Albigensian heresy.

In this stage of religious life, the prophetic sign was the apostolate exercised by the monk whose own life style was of singular benefit in preaching to, and educating, others. The challenge of religious life was now to provide the means by which

the Church could witness to the truth of its message in the university. Robert de Sorbon founded the Sorbonne in 1257, and among his colleagues he counted the Dominicans Albert the Great (c.1200-80), Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-74) and the Franciscan Bonaventure (c. 1217-74).

The apostolic endeavours of preaching the word of God, providing education to others, and engaging in ecclesial ministry were evidently seen as compatible with a monastic way of life. But the monastic way of life as it was originally conceived did not *prepare* one for apostolic activity. This was so because the monastic quest arose from an assumption that the God-experience sought by a religious was to be found in interior quiet, solitude and silence.

The Contemplative in Action

The sixteenth century marked a turning point in the way religious life was conceived. The challenge to the Church was posed by the Reformation, its clarion call *sola scriptura*, and the Renaissance humanism of fifteenth century Europe. In stressing the need to go back to the classical sources (*ad fontes*), the Renaissance implicitly questioned the Church's role of spiritual guide and, even more, her exercise of (papal) authority in the shaping of the fully-realized human person of that age.

It was Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) who, reading the signs of the times and having correctly recognized the challenge of his day, responded by placing religious life outside of the monastic mould. Ignatius perceived and assessed all things in terms of how they would further the Kingdom of God and assist in the mission of the Church in the world. He saw his Jesuits as responding to the need of the Church in the world in line with the thrust of the Council of Trent. The Jesuit was formed to be a *contemplativus in actione*.

The religious life to which a Jesuit was called did not include attending choir or reciting the office in common. The Jesuit did not obtain his identity from living with his fellow Jesuits but from the carrying out of a mission which he shared with them. Though authenticated by the Church, the mission originated in and was for the world *Seeing God in all things and all things in God* characterized the Jesuit's spirituality. The practices of religious life were to be retained in so far as they helped, or suppressed if they hindered, the mission. The religious' applica-

tion to study was not seen as competing with his prayer. To study was to pray because it was part of the Jesuit mission and it was in the carrying out of this mission that the Jesuit could be identified as a man of God, and not merely or only by spending long hours in prayer. The mission included what the Church, in the person of the Pope, asked of the Society for the proclaiming of the Kingdom (including the defence of the faith) and the salvation of peoples.

For Ignatius it was not as though one built up one's spirituality and then entered the world to sanctify it Rather, the world itself was God's own theatre of activity, and to become religious or spiritual was to become an active contemplative or a contemplative in action *in the world* By organizing religious life in this way, Ignatius effectively met the twin challenge posed by the Renaissance and the Reformation regarding the Church's guidance and authority

Quite decidedly, the Jesuit is not called to be a monk, nor is he a person who makes forays into the secular sphere to redeem it for Christ The spirituality he espouses obliges him to make the world, not the monastery, his home Religious life is the continuing witness to the action of God in Jesus Christ and his Church in a world that has already been redeemed

The Challenge in Religious Life Today

Four centuries have elapsed since Ignatius reinterpreted religious life For him, God was to be experienced in the world, in the community of men and women, and hence the (mission) apostolate in which the religious was engaged was to be the immediate and concrete means of his sanctification The world has evolved since then, and as we near the end of the twentieth century it is necessary for us to read the signs of the times anew Not only has the world changed, but the Church too has acquired a new understanding of herself The Second Vatican Council is proof of this new understanding

It is not by accident that PEOPLE OF GOD became the catchword of the Council's epoch-making document *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. The Council states unambiguously that ALL are called to be God's people (nos. 9-17) Instead of perceiving the Church's mission as one of bringing God into a world where he was not present before, we are asked to recognize the God of history at work in the events of

the world and in the human community. Such a theological vision would call for an understanding of religious life in which the world of persons, of suffering and of strife is not viewed as an obstacle to experience God, but as a condition for that experience. In practice, this would mean that the Church does not seek to create a 'parallel' world to which the religious can frequently retire to be in touch with his or her true evangelical identity, but that rather to bring about, in solidarity with the world and in the spirit of *Gaudium et Spes*, a community of freedom, of fellowship and of justice, as spelt out by George Soares-Prabhu in his article: "The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Vision of a new Society."[1]

The challenge in religious life today would seem to be the following. can the religious find his/her identity as part of God's people in partnership with the secular? For the secular must be seen as created by God and therefore holy and precious. The religious is invited to identify with the secular even as the second person of the Trinity identified with our humanity, so as to reveal the true worth and potential of the secular. In such a perspective, would it not be correct to say that the sacred does not oppose or negate the secular but symbolizes its truest meaning? that the religious lives out his/her mission today by representing God's caring presence in a world that seeks its fulfillment? that the oppression and evil we find in human community is not a sign of rejection by God, but the context in which a person's sanctification occurs?

II. Formation in Mission

If today's challenge in religious life is experienced in the immediate and concrete world of men and women, if the prayer of quiet is no substitute for finding God at work in the Calvary of everyday life, then a review of the way in which religious life is lived today must be an overriding preoccupation. I propose to do this by suggesting some areas in which a new and creative articulation of religious formation is called for.

---

[1]In D.S. Amalorpavadass (ed.), *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*. Bangalore: NBCLC, 1981, pp. 579-608.

1. The Religious Community

The religious community must not separate itself from the secular world so as to live in a security that is alienating and, ultimately, unreal. The religious community is the context in which a religious should find support for his/her mission in the world; it should be a circle of companions who help the individual religious to discern and critique his/her mode of responding to the challenges in a world of exploited men and marginalized women. Instead of emphasizing how the individual religious should live their life in community as though this were an end in itself, religious need to ask, first of all, how they relate to the people around them and if they are a help and support to the persons who constitute the world of their apostolates.

Accountability in the community has often meant examining if an individual or a group as a whole fulfil certain requirements as set down, e.g., in the constitutions, the decisions of general or province chapters or of major superiors, the norms for people in the religious state as set down in magisterial decrees and canon law But should not accountability to the people for whose sake the religious is given his/her mission matter more when assessments and evaluations are made by religious communities of their works and apostolates? Of what use is it for a person to make strenuous efforts to see that the compartment of a railway bogey is comfortable and that it conforms to safety specifications if the train does not run?

2. Apostolic Works

An accepted tradition needs to be reinterpreted over the years, else it becomes dead The Christian tradition has often recast itself in the history of the Church The contribution that Christianity made in preserving the wisdom of the past cannot be underestimated. Christianity's dynamism has shown itself in startlingly prophetic ways — in the emergence of religious orders and congregations; the conduct of Gregory VII (1021-85) while facing the problem in investiture; the reforms of the Council of Trent; the birth of Basic Christian Communities during recent times — and has asserted itself once again in the post-Vatican II era.

Reflecting on her tradition, and in the light of the social teaching which was articulated by Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and continues today with John Paul II encyclical *Centesimus*

Annus (1991), the Church of today has stated that social concern and commitment is part of her mission. In other words, if one claims to live a life of Christian faith today, one cannot do so without accepting that concern for social justice is an essential constituent of the Christian faith commitment.

In the light of the reinterpreted mission of the Church, can the religious charism today be authentic if it disregards the concerns which the Church herself has espoused? Can we not say that whatever be the nature of one's charism, its claim to be Christian and to be serving the Church and world is belied if it eschews social concern?

3. Aspects of Religious Formation

(a) If formation is not to be an imposition, then it must allow for the 'formee' to be given a chance to show his/her ability — or lack of it — in assessing real-life situations and in taking decisions.

(b) The ability of a person to get along in one's community is important, but his/her capacity to form community with men and women in the secular world needs to be assessed.

(c) Gender differentiation enters intimately into a person's identity. In the past, the recognition of such differentiation often expressed itself in cautions which were addressed to the 'formee' Should not a person in formation be given an open opportunity for a healthy and authentic living out of his/her sexual differentiation? Such an opportunity does not suggest a pairing of men and women religious, but it does envisage situations where they learn to work together in carrying out their respective missions and in dealing maturely with their affective selves.

(d) Many novitiates reflect a typically monastic vision of life. They are places in which a person must find God in seclusion, and imbibe a spirit of prayer in surroundings which keep out the challenges of everyday life. The supposition is that novice must be in confined surroundings so that he/she may be instructed about the claims and obligations which flow from the spirit and life-style of a congregation or order. But is provision made for real-life situations to occur so that the novice's readiness to accept those claims and obligations can be tested?

(e) The period of religious formation should be seen as extending to the end of a person's life. The novitiate, juniorate, and other periods of formation are formal stretches of time dur-

ing which a person learns how to meet the different contingencies which keep occurring throughout life. Formation is meant not so much to provide a novice with sure and completely formulated answers to hypothetical challenges but to make him/her aware of challenging situations which keep occurring throughout life. The formation time should be used to identify, evaluate and respond to the challenges which a religious will *in fact* have to cope with in his/her day-to-day experience. Should not formation in mission be actively encouraged rather than conceded?

(f) Methods of prayer should be taught and adopted which affirm the prayer experience that a person already has. If no effort is made to foster and encourage techniques for praying which are sufficiently creative and truly Indian, can the spirituality of a religious in today's India really claim to be inculturated?

(g) Authenticity in living out the religious life (the particular lifestyle that a congregation adopts) and honesty in dealing with and answering the questions of the 'formee' are crucial.

(h) If we believe in a God who is loving, sovereign and free, then we must view the vocation in the 'formee' primarily as a realization of the mystery of his will, and act on the assumption that God's call (his address to a person) and the 'formee's' effort (response to the address) are both present in his/her vocation

(i) A sound theological understanding about the following are essential. the grace of state (many sins are committed in its name!), the Abba experience of Jesus, sacramental piety (less stress on quantified grace and more emphasis on relatedness because of God's graciousness), personal sin, the person of Jesus, charism and institution in the Church and in the congregation; the mystery of obedience (those who have the authority to reveal the divine will may also succeed in concealing God's will behind their own!)

In the course of this essay, I have attempted to treat of the challenge of religious life today and the issues which should feature in a possible model of formation. The proposals presented are meant to foster a search for a model that will need constant recasting.

VJTR 54 (1990) 369-378

The Theologies of Europe in Dialogue with South-(East-)Asian Theologies

Dr Lothar LIES, S.J.

In the light of his experience of a direct contact with the Asian Church and Asian theologies a German theologian reflects on the characteristics of European theologies in their present situation and in their historical roots, and the contribution they can make for the future. In doing so he establishes a dialogue between the theologies of Europe and Asia. Recently a visiting Professor at Vidyajyoti, Dr Lies is Rector of the Canisianum College and Professor of Dogmatic and Ecumenical Theology at the University of Innsbruck (Karl-Rahner-Platz 3, A-6020, Innsbruck, Austria)

As visiting professor in Indonesia and India for over three months, I felt that the hubris and the really colonial attitude of the old European theology are still operative. Looking at the new European theologies, I ask first whether they have lost their hubris as a result of their modern European context. Secondly, I ask whether there is hope of a free exchange of experiences between European and non-European theologies today. I believe that all the signs of the times announce in Europe a new understanding of the European society. We are at the dawn of the United States of Europe and we should look for a new society, perhaps for a society marked by a non-ecclesiastical, secular catholicity, where nobody is excluded and all humans have the same value and have therefore the same rights and can count on the same help. This experience of human dignity, socialness and helpfulness to all provides the secular "milieu" for the expression of the catholicity of the Church in Europe. In its full sense catholicity means that nobody is excluded: all persons together and each person individually are accepted by society. Real mutual and personal help is the value.

I. Europe — The Context for its Theologies Today

1. Europe — economic

In the economic context one must ask how far Christian theologies have contributed to the economic wealth of the West.

The European theologies may well consider to what extent they themselves are prisoners of their economic context and, because they are clearly oriented towards Capitalism, how they are thereby actually tied to a Marxist anthropology. The capitalist interpretation of the human turns people into economic objects (Marx) and alienates them from their personal dignity. European theologies have to remember that any thinking which reduces the human person to economics puts society and the human environment on sale as well, and turns them into capitalist or socialist realities, and thereby destroys them. The new theologies of Europe have to develop new dimensions of the social concern in the light of the Gospel. As against the reduction of the human to the economic order, they must emphasize the non-marketable dignity of the human person and the solidarity that derives from it. This social concern can exclude no one and so represents a new inclusiveness (catholicity) founded on human dignity

The option for the poor, which is most characteristic of the "Third World Theologies," is a direct criticism of all European theologies done without this option Non-European theologies cannot see that European theologies have really left the capitalist, crypto-marxist point of view and have developed a new knowledge of the murderous economical realities in the world Only a clear option for the poor in Europe and in the world, and hence only subaltern European theologies which take into consideration the real needs of people, can be evidence of a change in ancient European theology Only this European option can guarantee that European theology has left its colonial and selfish mind A new theology of creation and of God as Father can unify European and non-European theologies

2. Europe — romantic

European theologies must take care not to confuse the evangelisation of Europe with the (romantic) establishment of the Church They should make sure to apportion to Church and State their proper and non-interchangeable tasks On the other hand the theologians should be prepared to overcome all selfish nationalism in Europe while still developing the cultural strengths of their nations The Church should not become a supernation or a superstate She must demonstrate this in her structures and in her actions Above all, European theologies should be on their guard so that no nation becomes a model for the Church

and no one theology (for instance German theology) becomes the official theology. Human dignity and the freedom of persons have priority over every institution of Church and State and over every nationality. Only a climate that excludes no one and infringes on nobody's personal dignity can make it possible for many cultures and confessions to live together.

For the Third World Theologies this means that they should have also their own freedom for inculturation and should not depend on European theologies. But never should a creative dialogue between the European and non-European theologies be interrupted Non-European theologies can learn the danger which comes out of an unreflected relation to the State, to different political movements, to national preferences or private interests Theologies should always defend the secular state which opens to different religions the possibility of being and working in the State.

3. Europe — many nations, many cultures, pluralistic

The theologies of Europe will increasingly have to be multinational and multicultural To this end they must develop strategies of reconciliation so as to bind the nations to one another and preserve their valuable cultures. The concept "catholic" implies variety of cultures reconciled to one another through the mutual recognition of the dignity of the person. National cultures, of course, but also the cultures of interest groups (artists, writers .). For the churches themselves this presupposes a much greater devolution of power of decisions which affect the dignity of people. This means that churches must be embedded in culture. There should be an official institution of the European Churches (Council of the European Bishops' Conference) corresponding to a community of multicultural theologies. Against the dominant pluralism in values, the theologies of Europe should develop more strongly the concept of human dignity and the principles of community, solidarity and socialness, so that non-Christians too can participate in the re-shaping of Europe.

European theologies can learn from the experiences of theologies in India and Indonesia. Theology is there more and more contextual, reflecting the concrete cultural and social life of the Church in the different cultures and languages of India and Indonesia. Therefore we have there a multicultural theological thinking The Bishops' Conferences have regional structures with the competence to decide on steps and ways of inculturation. Mainly because of their option for the

poor, these South and South-East Asian theologies have deeper theological inter-connection. They have therefore to develop a new theology of creation, of salvation, etc., by a subaltern theological hermeneutic.

4. Europe — ecumenical

Ecumenical theologies are needed for the unification of Europe so as to allay the fears other churches have of being incorporated into the Roman Catholic Church, and to prevent fundamentalist incursions into confessional groups (cf. Eastern Europe). The European theologies will actually have to be poly-ecumenical (in contrast with the time of the reformation, Chalcedon and before Chalcedon) because of the new European immigrants. Charitable activity must become the expression of European Christianity. This presupposes theologies which clearly root the supernatural unity of the church(es) in her/their visible presence in society, and not (only) in the superseded and often culturally conditioned doctrines. At the same time the theologies of Europe will have to investigate the reasons for the divisions in the Church of past times in regard to their significance for today and their consonance with human dignity. The question of the Eastern rite churches in a unified Europe must be reconsidered first and foremost from the point of view of nationality and the self-sufficiency of culture and religious practice. Furthermore, there must be a new kind of ecumenism within the churches: at present the same sectarian positions are spreading within the still separated churches to form a counter-ecumenism that is destructive of the Church The purpose of this wide-ranging counteroffensive will be to create a non-confessional climate for human dignity (catholicity)

The non-European theologies, especially the theologies in South and South-East Asia can show to European theologies and to the different Christian confessions in Europe that there is a new task for all Christian churches and for all other religions to work together for the value of human existence. In a special way, therefore, all ecumenical movement is and has to be today also an option for the poor. On the other hand, the different confessional theologies in Europe should learn that the export of special cultural and historical European problems of the time of the Reformation is a kind of theological imperialism and goes against the dignity of faith and freedom of grace.

5. Europe — place where world-religions meet

The European theologies must, for the sake of their own credibility — which cannot lie in a supernatural realm that is an object of pure faith — accept the emotional and intellectual debate with the world religions. As they encounter trends in Islam which are fundamentalist and fanatic (Holy War), the theologies of Europe are called upon to dissuade their churches from any behaviour that is fundamentalist, centralist-authoritarian, or fanatical in a religious sense. For in the end it is the human dignity that is at stake. If religions could come to terms with one another in a climate that never forgets human dignity, the foundations of a new understanding of catholicity would be laid.

Theologies in Europe can learn for their own contacts with other religions from the different contacts of South and South-Eastern Asian theologies with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, that these religions can also be in their historical expressions oppressive of the poor. This is specially evident in the Dalit problems within Hindu culture and Hindu religion. On the other hand, South-Eastern Asian theologies should realize that European Islam has an arabic-fundamentalistic thrust that perhaps cannot be found in the Islam of Indonesia and India. The coming "together" of different religions in the search of a better realization of human rights has been for years practised in India and Indonesia and should be learnt in Europe.

6. Europe — land of atheism

In the debate about theoretical and practical atheism European theologies will have to examine the extent to which atheism represents a genuine — if false — response to the Christian understanding of creation and of God and robs humanity of dignity The understanding of creation and of God needs therefore to be put forward more clearly and more accessibly to a wider range of cultures and shown to be the basis of human dignity. In this field perhaps Europe would have a leading intellectual role to play by reason of its history.

The Asian theologies, till now growing up in religious contexts, have seriously to watch in their own countries the development of secularism and atheism which finds roots in technical and economic progress. Western theologies should learn from the Asian theologies the different kinds of presence of God in his creation, especially in the human existence.

poor, these South and South-East Asian theologies have deeper theological inter-connection. They have therefore to develop a new theology of creation, of salvation, etc., by a subaltern theological hermeneutic.

4. Europe — ecumenical

Ecumenical theologies are needed for the unification of Europe so as to allay the fears other churches have of being incorporated into the Roman Catholic Church, and to prevent fundamentalist incursions into confessional groups (cf. Eastern Europe). The European theologies will actually have to be poly-ecumenical (in contrast with the time of the reformation, Chalcedon and before Chalcedon) because of the new European immigrants. Charitable activity must become the expression of European Christianity. This presupposes theologies which clearly root the supernatural unity of the church(es) in her/their visible presence in society, and not (only) in the superseded and often culturally conditioned doctrines. At the same time the theologies of Europe will have to investigate the reasons for the divisions in the Church of past times in regard to their significance for today and their consonance with human dignity. The question of the Eastern rite churches in a unified Europe must be reconsidered first and foremost from the point of view of nationality and the self-sufficiency of culture and religious practice. Furthermore, there must be a new kind of ecumenism within the churches: at present the same sectarian positions are spreading within the still separated churches to form a counter-ecumenism that is destructive of the Church. The purpose of this wide-ranging counteroffensive will be to create a non-confessional climate for human dignity (catholicity).

The non-European theologies, especially the theologies in South and South-East Asia can show to European theologies and to the different Christian confessions in Europe that there is a new task for all Christian churches and for all other religions to work together for the value of human existence. In a special way, therefore, all ecumenical movement is and has to be today also an option for the poor. On the other hand, the different confessional theologies in Europe should learn that the export of special cultural and historical European problems of the time of the Reformation is a kind of theological imperialism and goes against the dignity of faith and freedom of grace.

5. Europe — place where world-religions meet

The European theologies must, for the sake of their own credibility — which cannot lie in a supernatural realm that is an object of pure faith — accept the emotional and intellectual debate with the world religions. As they encounter trends in Islam which are fundamentalist and fanatic (Holy War), the theologies of Europe are called upon to dissuade their churches from any behaviour that is fundamentalist, centralist-authoritarian, or fanatical in a religious sense. For in the end it is the human dignity that is at stake. If religions could come to terms with one another in a climate that never forgets human dignity, the foundations of a new understanding of catholicity would be laid.

Theologies in Europe can learn for their own contacts with other religions from the different contacts of South and South-Eastern Asian theologies with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, that these religions can also be in their historical expressions oppressive of the poor. This is specially evident in the Dalit problems within Hindu culture and Hindu religion. On the other hand, South-Eastern Asian theologies should realize that European Islam has an arabic-fundamentalistic thrust that perhaps cannot be found in the Islam of Indonesia and India. The coming "together" of different religions in the search of a better realization of human rights has been for years practised in India and Indonesia and should be learnt in Europe.

6. Europe — land of atheism

In the debate about theoretical and practical atheism European theologies will have to examine the extent to which atheism represents a genuine — if false — response to the Christian understanding of creation and of God and robs humanity of dignity. The understanding of creation and of God needs therefore to be put forward more clearly and more accessibly to a wider range of cultures and shown to be the basis of human dignity In this field perhaps Europe would have a leading intellectual role to play by reason of its history.

The Asian theologies, till now growing up in religious contexts, have seriously to watch in their own countries the development of secularism and atheism which finds roots in technical and economic progress. Western theologies should learn from the Asian theologies the different kinds of presence of God in his creation, especially in the human existence.

7. Europe — land of sects

In the encounter with the new or ancient sects, European theologies must discuss the relationship of emotion to belief, of institution to community, of sheltering intimacy to faith. These theologies should strive for a presentation of Christianity that makes it even emotionally a homeland. Human dignity must be shown to spring from the greatness of God. The understanding of the spiritual and emotional life that this conception demands must also be explored. These theologies should take up clear positions: certain attitudes of faith within the traditional churches can no longer be honestly considered Christian (Opus Angelorum, etc). They contradict the dignity of humanity and do not belong in the "catholic" climate.

Observing the battles with the different Christian sects in Europe, non-European theologies should avoid the mistake of theological conformism The non-European theologies should go ahead with their regional, social and even emotional inculturation, so that in a certain sense the Christian sects do not became necessary

8. Europe — land of many theologies

The theologies of Europe reject any monopolisation of theology. They do not present themselves as the property of a clerical elite many groups, communities, local churches, synods, support them A new task falls on the theological faculties in subsidiarity to foster this process of making the dialogue of faith more human

The non-European theologies should also accept their own competence, should build up their theological centres, develop the main points of their theological interest and realize the plurality of theologies in their own countries (Dalit, etc)

II. Occidental Theology: The Catholicity of the Past

The above theses have shed light on the role of theologies today, at one point in time. European theologies can only fulfil their task in Europe if they are convinced that humanity has a dignity which can never be surrendered and if they create for Europe a climate of non-confessional catholicity based on the dignity of the human We shall now investigate the concept of "the Occident" in history in order to uncover in the roots of (western) European theologies those elements of an older and

precious catholicity that are requisite for any new catholicy.

The non-European theologies will then realise that the period of "one," in a certain sense transcultural but "colonialist" European (scholastic), theology is over.

1. The Occident — the home of classical Roman culture

The cultural region of the Roman Empire after the Theodosian's division that included Rome is where occidental theology is practised. One of its special characteristics is "Romanitas." Accordingly, we still find traces of legalistic tendencies (the Roman's juridical mind), of linguistic precision at the expense of immediacy (Latin), of syllogistic rather than dialectic forms of reasoning, in the theology of the West. Our theologies should be aware of the dangerous heirloom of occidental theology, its tendency to "obtain in all regions" (Lerin), and therefore its claim of being cross-culturally valid, and consequently elitist. It is not words or concepts but the dignity of humanity pointing us to God which should "obtain in all regions" (catholic).

The non-European theologies have no longer to put up with the monolithic Latin language or the 'uninculturable' Latin theology. The artificial cultural hegemony, the "captivity of the Latin Church" and theology is over An intercultural dialogue between the different cultures and their theologies in different parts of the (catholic) Church has begun.

2. The Occident — Middle Ages — an elite cultural unity

The young Church took up the duties of the State. The representatives of the State (specially the Emperor) were consecrated by the Church. Within the relatively isolated monastic and imperial schools, the Latin conceptual framework permitted the Greco-Latin experience and attitudes to life to mix with Franco-German attitudes and experience, unreflectively. The intellectual and political upper class, which spoke Latin and practised theology, concerned itself with the running of State and Church but grew remote from the sensitivities of the people. Even the universities could not withstand the elitist nature of theology. On the one hand, at the Imperial Council of Augsburg (1555) a plurality of theologies was preferred to the elitist theology of the Middle Ages (*cuius regio, eius religio*), without however really achieving the religious freedom that befits human

dignity. On the other hand, the attempts at inculturation by the Jesuits in Latin America (the Reductions) and in Asia (the Rites dispute) were halted by the feudal authorities in the spirit of the Middle Ages (old catholicity) thus going against the right to have a culture one's own. Today, human dignity requires unmistakably that each one's right to his or her own culture be respected. Where this is not the case, the climate of human dignity is destroyed (a false form of catholicity).

The non-European theologies are therefore free to create their own theological subjects, questions and approaches.

3. The Occident — Church and State

The theologies of the West carry the tension of the secularisation of the Church to the point where it becomes a political institution and the spiritualisation of the State to the point where it becomes the means of salvation. Marx himself paraphrased the classless society as a secular Kingdom of God, and transferred the religious image of Paradise to a political realisation by the State of a political system and party (cf. *Bekenntnis von Barmen*) and this clearly in opposition to a Church taking the place of the State, monistic in outlook and obsessed with power. We interpret today's task as a call for the creation of a social and political realm at whose centre are humanity and human solidarity. The notion and the experience of human solidarity is and must remain open for the transcendent against all self-isolating individualism and impersonal collectivism.

The non-European theologies must be convinced, that an European State government will never use the religious power of the Christian churches for expansion They can be also convinced that the European churches will never call for the arms of the State or of the Inquisition to defend Christian orthodoxy

4. The Occident — the Slavonic world

Since the time of the conquest and missionary activity at the hands of the Western emperor (Charlemagne), certain Slavic peoples belong to the Occident (for instance, parts of Poland). The theologies of Occident and Orient have continually treated one another with suspicion and hostility Today Eastern peoples are expected to be mediators who practice Western theologies (Roman) in a Slavic culture (language). The failure of this mediation must make the theologies of Europe aware of a deep-

rooted lack of respect for human dignity underlying the new Catholic climate. Christianity in Europe is arguably the poorer for this failure to accomodate the Eastern perceptions. The often degenerate history of occidental Christianity (Inquisition) has surely proved that the question of Christ and the triune God can only be put and answered in a climate where human dignity is upheld.

The different non-European (Indian and Indonesian) theologies can work together within and in front of different cultures, because they are united in the way they glorify God through their defence of the theological value of human persons

III. Europe — Intimation of the New Catholicity

The central message of Jesus Christ and the triune God is the basis for European theologies and their task. Today it can be heard less and less and is urgently in need of a new credibility. The "new catholicity" demanded of the community of European theologies means a climate for the human, at whose centre we experience the dignity of the person, our social existence and solidarity All religions have a place here. Against this background, the message of Jesus shines forth for he proclaims the dignity of human beings, their equal rights and their solidarity in community, because this is what the image of God demands. If all human beings have God as their Father then their dignity has a divine origin, their fellow human-beings are brothers and sisters with the same rights as they (social beings), and their love means solidarity The new catholicity in Jesus' message is not merely a horizontal thing In this climate of catholicity founded on the human, the triune God is also revealed. As the Father is the source of the inalienable dignity of the person and eternally upholds that dignity, so He, together with Son and Spirit, reveals the indestructible community of love (social being). Because the Father is only Father through the Son, and the Son only Son through the Father, the Trinitarian love (solidarity) reveals itself as Trinitarian "kenosis" in a sense that is beyond all human understanding Our climate of the human, founded on the dignity of the person, social being and on subsidiarity, becomes a realm for the revelation of the triune God in Christ. Here humanity is freed from the madness of self-redemption.

The same can be said, and this is my experience, about Indian and

Indonesian theologies. They are working hard for a "milieu" of human liberation, where the trinitarian God can be seen as the basic community. Therefore we have arrived at a moment in the history of theologies where European and non-European theologies can learn from each other on a level. Eastern and Western theologies are united by the realisation of the value of the human person. This realisation will on the one hand be the authentic context for teaching true Christianity and on the other hand make the Church in this world the sacrament of the transcendent Kingdom of God.

Information

Proposals Invited for Projects in Mission Research

The Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut, administers the Research Enablement Program for the advancement of scholarship in studies of Christian Mission and Christianity in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis in the following categories

Field research for doctoral dissertations,
Postdoctoral book research and writing projects,
Missiological consultations (small scale),
Planning grants for major interdisciplinary research projects

Projects that are cross-cultural, collaborative, and interdisciplinary are especially welcome The deadline for receiving the 1995 grant applications is December 1, 1994 For further information and official application forms please contact

Geoffrey A. Little, Coordinator
Research Enablement Program
Overseas Ministries Study Center
490 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511 U.S.A.
Tel:(203)865-1827
Fax:(203)865-2587

This program is supported by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts

Document

Being Church in Asia: Journeying with the Spirit into Fuller Life

Final Statement of the First FABC International Theological Colloquium Pattaya, Thailand April 10-16, 1994.

Introduction

1 Life Vibrant life pulsating in the fecundity of Asia The promise and hope of full life in our Sacred Scriptures Life in the Reign of God. What Jesus came for — that we might have life and have it abundantly (cf Jn 10·10) Life as gift and task. The journey into this Life, the struggle for this Life, was the overarching theme that integrated our discussions at the International Theological Colloquium sponsored by FABC's Theological Advisory Commission at Pattaya, Thailand, on April 10-16, 1994 [1]

2 Gathered by the Spirit of God, we prayed and discerned by the same Spirit, worked, reflected, resolved and celebrated in the same Spirit. It is by the Spirit that we, coming from various races, languages, existential situations and cultures of Asia, grew into a unity of heart in our concern for Asia and for the Church Life comes in the Spirit. Life is refreshed and renewed — reborn — in the Spirit

3 With this faith in the Spirit of Jesus, we dared to explore difficult questions How can we as Church be truly of Asia and be truly of Jesus? What is the face of Jesus in Asia? How can we, in a palpably minority situation, fulfil the mission of announcing to one and all that Jesus gives life, that he is Life? What service can our theology provide to promote a more just, a more loving life? What can we do to promote a life more human in a vast suffering continent of widespread marginalization and deprivation? How must we be as Church at the service of life, radiating hope to our Asian peoples?

4 We know that we may have posed the questions inadequately and

[1] The Colloquium dealt with the theme· Being Church in Asia in the Twenty-First Century It intended to achieve two general objectives: (a) to evaluate the theological papers of the Theological Advisory Commission of the Federation of Asian Bishops's Conferences and (b) to make a theological contribution towards the 1995 FABC General Assembly to be held in Manila Fifty-six participants (lay people, religious sisters, priests and Bishops, theologians from Europe and Asia) attended the Colloquium. While the FABC has explored the theme of being Church in Asia at various seminars such as BIMA, BIRA, BISA, and BILA, and at its Plenary Assemblies, this was the first time a meeting with a mainly theological focus was held.

even inappropriately. We know that our answers hardly touch the mystery that is Asia, much less the mystery of Jesus and of ourselves as his followers. But we offer the fruit of our reflection at the service of the Church in Asia, so that all may know Life and rise to Life

Part I : New Phenomena in Asia as Challenge and Possibility

Our Reflection Begins with an Overview of the Asian Reality

5. As Asia moves into the 21st century, new and exciting developments are overtaking Asian countries The phenomenon of the technological age has truly made our whole world a global village The emergence of freedom and justice in one corner of Asia catches the attention of countries in the other continents in a matter of seconds through the communication media This vast world has become a village where encouragement, inspiration and hope can quickly be communicated to people who suffer disasters Knowledge is exploding beyond our imagination The secrets of the universe are captured in small electronic gadgets that make learning more accessible, serving and loving others more readily given The phenomenon of women's movements is yet another positive development They are increasing in Asia, making women aware of their potentialities and resources, challenging centuries of subordination to men, enabling them to claim their rights and full participation in public life The Spirit of God is present in these developments From a biblical point of view of ongoing creation, we could attribute all these wonders to God and exclaim with the Psalmist "How marvelous are your works, O Lord!"

6 Developments in science and technology and economics are facilitating various movements that past FABC assemblies (see FABC V, Bandung) have noted the movement toward community in various Asian countries, the movement toward participation and the striving towards a deeper sense of the divine Hopeful, living movements that speak of Asia's struggle towards a fuller life

7 Yet our optimism has to reckon with the undeniable ambivalence of the changes that are taking place Let us, therefore, look more deeply into the Asian reality

Economic Growth and Industrialization

8 The phenomenon that we read or hear about almost everyday is in the economic field — the dream of economic growth

9 An inexorable process of industrialization is taking place in Asia It is strongly linked to and dependent upon a process of economic globalization The flow of foreign capital both from the West and the more developed East Asian countries allows for methods of production and introduction of technologies way beyond the present capabilities of some of our Asian countries to absorb without trauma. Neocolonialism becomes more entrenched

10 Fundamental changes in work patterns, in the basic structure of our economies, and in the very nature of relationships among individuals and communities are occurring. People become a mechanical part of the production process and as a result work becomes exploitative and dehumanizing This is especially true of women workers. Atrocities committed on women, their lives, their work, and on children are intensified. Women are often the first to feel the impact of economic retrenchment and inflation They are often the last to be protected and cared for

11 Although the majority of our economies are still rural and agricultural, the gross neglect of this sector has obvious negative and devastating impact on the lives of individuals and communities. The rural sector remains stagnant

Modernization, Secularization and Media

12 Together with the process of industrialization has come the need to modernize the commercial sector The process strengthens the consumeristic lifestyles into which even now the poor are being initiated Through the commercialization of education and the control of mass media, economics has become the dynamo of all aspects of life. Just as there is no "value-free" technology, there is no value-free media Through the dissemination of information and entertainment, the media is creating values both good and bad and promoting a whole new way of looking at life A serious discernment is needed on this. The children and the youth of Asia are the most exposed to these "alien" notions of the meaning of life itself The image of women as portrayed in the media maintains and reinforces the view of women as inferior to men and objects of pleasure Accompanying the thrust of modernization is secularization The traditional close-knit relationships within Asian families are beginning to erode but new forms of intimacy are being explored and fostered The deep religious and community sense that characterizes most Asian peoples is, indeed, dissipating

Politics and People's Participation

13 We perceive the dominant role of industrial and business conglomerates that virtually control major portions of the economy and especially those closely related to traditional oligarchies, modern industrialists with political connections, as well as those closely affiliated to the military in most of our countries A subtle repression of the rights of individuals and communities to participate meaningfully in processes of decision-making is tragically taking place. On the pretext of national security and political stability, human rights are being curtailed. Sadly, politics is for power to dominate and not for service to the vast majority Religious resurgence is taking place in many countries of Asia and is often a very positive movement. But the merging of religious fundamentalism and narrow ethnicity is creating new forms

of violence, hatred and divisions.

The Impact of New Phenomena

14. Expected changes in almost every facet of life in the twenty-first century concomitant with and, perhaps, because of developments in sciences, technology and the communications media will surely have a significant impact on the cultures and peoples of Asia for good or ill. People need to be rooted in the deeper meanings of life, if they are to be truly human. Should these roots be weakened (or worse destroyed), cultural dislocation and dehumanization will take place

15. Mass production made possible by high technology will democratise the availability of a bewildering multiplicity of goods and services Sophisticated means of communication will offer new possibilities of sharing and coming together of peoples of different cultures and religions. But the formation of a mass society will most likely be also characterized by the dissolution of traditional links by anonymity and marginalization This needs to be critically assessed in the light of the freedom and the cultural identities of peoples.

16. In Asia the politically powerful elite, who are usually in the minority, are the bearers of a dominant sub-culture Popular sub-cultures are those of the poor and politically marginalized majority The foreseen societal changes leading to globalization in the twenty-first century will probably impoverish and further weaken the sub-culture of the poor

17. The above projections are now being confirmed In our view, progress and advancement of the few have created false hopes among the people who believe that "abundance" will trickle down to the whole of the Asian community

18 The once self-sustaining economies and rural communities both traditional and tribal are the most affected by these trends The depreciation of the rural economy and the decreasing dependence on the primary commodities of foreign exchange have depressing implications for the future of rural communities

19 Even as individuals and entire communities become victims of this process, so also the environment and nature The destruction of rain forests and the pollution of the environment are just two of the negative consequences

20. The nature of work in the modern industrial sector has also affected family life and health New patterns of work relationships are attacking the unity and stability of the family Women and children become the most obvious victims. Already the victims of the myth of male superiority, women are subject to new forms of violence and cultural alienation.

21. The obsessive drive towards economic and material achievement, the quest to satisfy needs created by media and the new technological culture are subtly leading people to a life without moral and religious roots

A Fundamental Perspective and Option of the Church in Asia

22. In the light of the above context, the Church in Asia will have to reformulate its role. This requires a renewed Vision and a revitalized sense of Mission, a deeper awareness of its human resources. Among these resources are:

(a) the human person: gifted with a God-given dignity from the first moment of life, and endowed with boundless potentialities to promote fuller life, the human person is the first resource;

(b) the family: the Asian family is traditionally close-knit, caring, serving, hospitable, religious. It is the hope of the Church at its most basic level;

(c) the youth: energetic, filled with idealism, highly capable of committing themselves to the cause of justice and freedom, they are the untapped resources for mission and life,

(d) women. in partnership with men, they are at the heart of the Asian family, enduring symbols of compassion and caring, harmony and love. Life-giving and life-nourishing, in mutuality with men, they are even now at the forefront in the struggle for justice and freedom.

With these and other human resources, the Church has to challenge the ambivalence of Asian realities and harness their positive elements towards human development

23. In the midst of massive changes in Asia the Church has to announce with greater renewed vigour the God-given meaning of life and an alternative way of life and existence, through its Word, Deed and Being The incarnation of the Gospel calls for a new quality of life that consists not just in "having more" but in "being more" and sharing more

24 This means for us in the context of Asia a deeper awareness of the meaning of Church We are a little flock in Asia We are but one community among a vast multitude journeying to full life. Our special contribution in this journey is our striving towards a "Communion of Communities" beginning with the family, a New Way of Being Church that brings the new face of Christ into the workings of Asian society

Part II : The Face of Jesus in Asia

25 How the Church responds to the challenges posed by the new phenomenon depends fundamentally on how it understands discipleship But to answer that question the Church has first to understand who Jesus is in the Asian context.

Jesus the Lord

26 If Jesus were to ask us today in Asia, "Who do you say I am?" we would boldly confess as did the early Church "You are the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (cf Col 1·15) You are the Messiah, the Saviour, the Lord! "You are the Word in the beginning, you are with God, you are God" (cf. Jn 1:1). Ours is the faith of

the Apostles in the Risen Christ.

Jesus and the Poor: Preferential Option

27. Yet when we reflect on the harsh underside of suffering Asia, the image of Jesus that captures our imagination is his human portrait in the Scriptures. Born of woman (Gal 4 4), he is the God who pitches his tent among us (Jn 1·14). He empties himself to be in solidarity with the little ones, those treated as non-persons — the poor, and deprived, the outcast and marginalized, the oppressed and downtrodden, the sick, those who do not count, children and women He strikes at the natural upward mobility of humankind and goes down to the downtrodden, walks among them, lives with them, takes up their burdens, call them his friends (Lk 4 18, 15.2) This predilection for the poor we now call his preferential option

Breaking down Barriers

28 He breaks down social barriers, encrusted in customs and traditions and entrenched in social structures He challenges religious exclusivism that divides Jew and Samaritans, and announces a radically new worshipping of God "in Spirit and Truth " He dares to touch the untouchables, calls women to be his close disciples His love touches the miserable lives of the outcast, unshackles their chains of non-dignity and insecurity, and leads them into the freedom and joy that he shares with his Father He speaks to them of his Father, "our Father," who cares not only for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field but, even more, for persons (Mt 6 25-32, Lk 12 22-30) He forgives and reconciles He is the person of harmony He is peace (Jn 14·27; 20·21-23, Eph 2 14)

The Kingdom of God

29 He speaks confidently and authoritatively about God and his reigning The Kingdom is here, in your midst! (Lk 17 21) He is most compassionate over the multitude He weeps for an individual (Jn 11 35-36), he weeps for a whole city (Lk 19 41-44) He wants to give them life He calls the poor blessed, the Kingdom of God is theirs! (Lk 6 20) The homeless, the hungry, the naked — the little ones — bear his face Uncompromising in defending the little ones, his healing touch, forgiving words, signal the compassionate irruption of the Kingdom of God into our space and time

Bold Prophecy

30 For their sake he boldly confronts the powers that be and denounces their greed, their hypocrisy (Mt 23 13-36, Lk 12 1), corruption and oppression, their leadership, their forgetting the weightier matters of the law, like justice, mercy and faith (Mt 23:23) Bold and daring, thirsting for justice, the prophet of the ages, his words and actions subvert the values of this world He speaks of reconciling with one's enemies, praying for them, loving them, and forgiving them (Mt 5:43-48; Lk 6.27-36) Such a radical love beyond all telling!

A Countersign in Economics and Politics

31 He enters the realm of economics, relativizes wealth, places all material possession at the service of the Kingdom, condemns slavery to mammon, the greed and the selfishness that characterize the idolatry of wealth (Lk 12:13-21; Mt 6:24). He is the Way (Jn 14:6). As Master, he serves He shows what power is for, not to dominate and oppress, but to serve (Jn 13:13-15; Lk 22:27; Mk 10:45). He does not hesitate to confront the powers that be It is by serving that one rules. As Teacher, he lives by his words He is authenticity, transparency, credibility, the Truth. He is killed because his view of truth runs counter to religious claims and the ruling elite's idea of the common good.

The Cross and the Eucharist: Love and Life

32 The free giving of his own self to death by the cruel and brutal execution on the cross demonstrates what loving, sharing, and serving mean Because he loves, he dies for our sake. Because he loves, we live

33 The Eucharist that he celebrates with his followers on the night before he dies sacramentally memorializes this total love (Mk 14·22-25; Mt 26 26-29, Lk 22.14-20, cf Jn 13 1-5) This is what it means to be the Anointed, the Christ, the Person who by dying gives life to humanity. The bitter cup of suffering he accepts (Mk 14·36, Mt 26:39, 42; Lk 22·42) Absurd, yes, but in this most cruel and most total vulnerability, in this most irrational of human experiences, is the power and the wisdom and the love of God (1 Cor 1 24)

34 By his suffering and death, Jesus conquers death, restores life. His rising from the dead makes him "the Victory of Suffering Humanity " This is part of the Easter joy that has to pervade our struggling and hoping He is the bread and the drink of life, life-giving water (Jn 6·51; 4 10 13, 7·37-38) He is life He fulfills the deepest aspirations of humanity for full life, a person totally for others and totally for God

35 This is the Jesus we have heard, have somehow touched and looked at in the mysteries we celebrate (1 Jn 1·1) This is how we see Jesus with an Asian face

36 He is then the word of life that we must share with our fellow Asians For as he was Good News to the poor of his time, so today he cannot but be Good News to the "teeming millions" of Asia This human image of Jesus, born of woman, God-made-poor, God-with-us, our Peace, teacher and prophet, healer, a person of harmony, suffering servant-leader, liberator, life-giver, is one that powerfully resonates with Asia's situation of servitude, with Asia's struggle towards justice and harmony — with our struggle for life

The Face of the Church in Asia

37 And if the Master, so the disciple-community, the Church. Only when our words, actions, lifestyle flow from what we believe in Jesus can we invite people to "come and see " The face of Jesus will attract

the peoples of Asia in and through the face of the Church.

The Disciples of Jesus the Lord

38. The confession "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil 2:11) gives birth to a community of disciples. As a community that recognizes Jesus as Lord, our very *being* as disciples is marked by service, a being then towards the other This makes us continually seek, contemplate and behold the *face* of the living Lord. We, the disciples of Jesus *the Lord*, are invited to present to Asia the face of a confessing, serving, discerning and contemplating Church.

39 But even as we say this, we are also aware of our sinfulness both as people and as institution. It was Peter the disciple who, facing the Lord, confessed, "Lord, depart from me for I am a sinner " Triumphalism, discrimination, clericalism, domination, exclusivism, accommodation at the expense of truth and justice are but a few of the attitudes that may have been built into our structures A confession of sinfulness leads to conversion, and a deeper discipleship

The Disciples of Jesus the Poor

40. As the human portrait of Jesus attracts the peoples of Asia, especially its suffering and marginalized masses, our community is being called upon to assume a truly human face. a Church that does not resist being incarnated in weak humanity, a Church that will not turn away from the crosses of history, a Church that does not hold back in emptying itself, a Church that is not scandalized in being poor, a Church that dares to be the Church of the Poor Through this Church, the face of the Jesus who loves the poor with predilection will shine forth in Asia.

The Disciples of the Jesus of Communion and Harmony

41 In Asia the face of Jesus as reconciliation and peace has a special appeal As a Church community, we are called to be the sacrament, the sign and instrument, of the communion with God and with humanity that Jesus brings (cf LG 1) Because our inner life as Church community is the Spirit of communion, we can ignore our mission of breaking down all barriers only to the negation of our own identity.

42. We are not only called to communion as individuals We are also called to a communion of peoples and of ecclesial communities and overcome the divisions of Christian churches By this do we dramatize that the disciple-community is, indeed, God's own people

43. In the context of religious fundamentalism, interreligious violence, societal fragmentation and ecological destruction, we affirm the validity of FABC's insights into being a Church of dialogue. Dialogue is the primary mode for the Church of Asia in the promotion of harmony But like our Master, we will be able to foster harmony only by taking the path of a love of preference for the poor

The Disciples of Jesus, Servant of the Kingdom of God

44 As Jesus expended his whole life for the Kingdom of God, we are

being invited to deepen our relation to this fundamental vision of our Lord. It requires the stripping of all triumphalism in Church life and structures because the Kingdom is greater than ourselves. It urges us to glory only in being the humble servant of the Kingdom, since apart from it we lose the meaningfulness of our community. It impels us to be truly missionary, for the life that the Kingdom promises must be discovered in and shared with others. It subjects us constantly to the judgment of the Kingdom because the values of the Kingdom will ultimately unite us to Our Lord.

The Disciples of Jesus, Prophet and Countersign

45 Jesus served the Reign of God primarily through prophetic counter-witness. There is no other face that the Church of Asia can take. Through our proclamation, lifestyle and presence, we must expose the false values so easily embraced by the Asia of today and their dehumanizing effects, particularly on the poor In the midst of manipulation, we have to be the announcers of truth and freedom. In the midst of gross consumerism, opulence and materialism, the symbol of evangelical simplicity and moderation. In the midst of grinding poverty and destitution, the advocate of justice and liberation In the midst of obsession with prestige and power, the embodiment of compassion, caring, mercy, selflessness, and love

46. To project such a face, we must be willing to strip ourselves of mentalities, categories and human structures that blur the face of the Prophet and Sign of Contradiction that we call our Lord.

The Disciples of the Crucified Lord

47. The face of the naked Jesus on the cross does not fail to attract the peoples of Asia The darkness of faith in the midst of abandonment felt by our Crucified Lord is sometimes our own experience as disciples. For us, the face of the Crucified Lord means total and selfless love of God and neighbour The face of the Church must be the face of pure love, especially in the darkness of unloving But we know that the cross is a symbol, too, of the Risen Christ. Our love then has to help fill our world with joy and hope, with great optimism in the midst of suffering.

Part III : The Response of the Church in Asia

A. Theology at the Service of Life

48. We see the work of theology in Asia as a service to life. It has to reflect systematically on themes that are important to the common journey of life with other peoples in Asia, to the life of Christians and their churches in Asia, and to the work of the Asian episcopal conferences.

49. To do this service in a way that is pastorally relevant and fruitful to the life, spirituality and mission of the disciple-community, theology

has to start from below, from the underside of history, from the perspective of those who struggle for life, love, justice and freedom. The life-long experiences of living the Christian faith by the various churches in their Asian context are the starting points Theologising thus becomes more than faith seeking understanding, but faith fostering life and love, justice and freedom.

50 It is in this way that theology becomes a dynamic process giving meaning to and facilitating the Asian journey to life It becomes part of the process of becoming and being Church in Asia

B. Pastoral Orientations

51 Discipleship is a new paradigm for understanding the Church It requires that the Church be missionary The Church is therefore called to a renewed evangelization, as the proclamation of Jesus In the Asian context, renewed evangelization requires a new expression, renewed methods, and a renewed fervour Pastoral creativity is needed for this

52 Discipleship within the Church calls for a radical conversion from death-dealing ways and structures towards a life-giving praxis, a conversion which presupposes the change of mind-set This means creating an inclusive community that does not discriminate in terms of culture, social class or gender when it comes to the question of equality and mutuality within the Church It implies the promotion of a genuine sense of belonging whether this be in the form of facilitating reflection on the Word of God in small groups or communities, taking concrete steps to make the liturgy meaningful for a variety of groups, strengthening the sense of being Church among families where values of the Kingdom are first handed on, empowering the laity towards their participation in the Church's life and mission which is theirs by right of baptism and confirmation, promoting the mutuality and partnership between men and women in every sphere of family, of society, and of Church life As a disciple-community, we will have to explore more deeply the question of the place and the role of women in the Church

53 Other pastoral implications include the rectification of unjust or discriminatory practices, particularly towards women within ecclesiastical structures, the acceptance of the youth as equal partners in mission and as worthy of respect, the implementation of a serious theological education programme for the laity *and clergy* that communicates to them up-to-date developments and helps them to respond more effectively to the challenges posed by daily life.

54 Discipleship in the promotion of life also calls for the engagement in social transformation Today this is expressed through a committed solidarity with all those who are deprived of life economically by grappling with the issues of justice and peace, struggling with them an creating programmes geared towards economic upliftment It also means a respectful acceptance as the Church's own of the culture of the people with whom it searches for what is truly life-giving

55 To this end, the Church initiates and develops a process of inculturation that makes it confident to draw up its own pastoral letters and synodal documents and to share them with other local churches
56 As a community of disciples the Church will work with churches and other Christian communities and other people of good will, even those whose religious vision differs from its own, by involvement, particularly through the laity, in secular movements that promote life To be credible in the area of economics, not only is the Church to promote economic literacy through critical examination of economic models and government policies, but it must also encourage viable alternatives as well as adopt a simple lifestyle. Relationships with others is to be person-oriented on the part of Church leaders rather than office-oriented There is a serious need to rectify the image of pomp and power, of authoritarianism within the Church, that are contrary to the image of a Church of the Poor and a Church of Dialogue.
57 Because the Church is communication (of the Gospel), it must cultivate good relations with media professionals and become more aware of the power of the media, understand its processes and gain real competence in the discerning use of them
58 In its search to be responsive to the Gospel imperative, the Church is to make sure that its human structures are created "from below" in tune with the demands of the time and in harmony with the culture of the people Through these diverse ways and in solidarity with one another, the Church can reflect the face of Jesus in Asia for Asia

Conclusion

59 We are witnessing the birth of a new world in Asia This great, massive continent, rich not only in cultures and faiths, but also with limitless possibilities yet battered by incredible degradations on her lands and peoples, is groaning with the pangs of childbirth From out of the divisions, conflicts and violence, environmental destruction, innumerable injustices, cultural erosion that wrack the soul of Asia, comes a cry of deep anguish It is the anguish of the poor The millions of Asian poor are groaning for a re-birth, a re-creation, which only the Spirit of Jesus can achieve
60 Impelled by love, the love of the peoples of Asia and the love of Jesus, we have no option but to heed the cry New life is aborning And the form and quality of the new creation cannot be left to the machinations of political and economic forces. Like the prophet of old, the Church today must answer Send me Lord, I am your servant
61. We take up this mission not alone, but with our peoples of Asia themselves, the various faiths and cultures, their enduring values that come from the Spirit and the Word of God breathed and spoken from the beginning of time. It is ultimately the God of all peoples that calls the disciple-community and it is the same God in Jesus who accompanies us Led by the Spirit we embark on this mission

62. Loving and Life-giving God,
at the beginning you called us
in Asia into life, enriched us
with an astonishing variety of cultures, ways of living and believing.
As sisters and brothers in your one Asian family,
we thank you and praise you
for your gifts
63 Among us are the poorest of the poor,
millions who seek not only a better life
but the full Life that only you can give
We hear your call to serve them
the way your Son, Jesus, served others
in total love, in utter selflessness,
eucharistically

VJTR 58 (1994)390-394

Listen to the Spirit

Consecrated Life

Theme of the Bishops' Synod 1994

The Bishops' Synod in October 1994 will discuss the life and mission of consecrated people in the Church and the world of today The theme concerns not only members of religious communities but all Christians It has special significance for our Church in India with its great variety of religious communities, in particular 72,000 Sisters, who make a substantial contribution to the Christian life in our country and greatly influence the image of the Church

The coming Synod has been prepared for more than a year It will be concerned not only with legal questions, e g , the relation of religious to the hierarchy, but even more with the true understanding of consecrated life Many feel that religious life is in a crisis all over the world The preparatory document, the *Lineamenta*, was meant to animate reflection and discussion on its significance, particularly in view of the great changes in Church and society

This reflection cannot consist merely in a review of the present situation with the intention to correct the faults and improve the life and work of the religious and other 'consecrated' person The widespread insecurity, frequent confusion, and even glaring misunderstanding of their vocation among the religious indicate the need of going back to the origin. All renewing in the Church must come through the creative Spirit from which the Church is born and must ever be born anew So we turn to Jesus' message

In traditional theology religious life was based on the distinction between commandments and counsels. Commandments are given to servants, counsels to friends; commandments contain a must of moral duties, counsels point at a higher way, a more perfect form of life to which also a higher reward is attached Thus the observance of the three counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience would constitute a superior status of life in the body of the Church. Even the early preparatory documents of the Council had been written on these assumptions But after long and laborious discussions, those documents were finally and fully discarded So we may turn first to a more genuine understanding of the commandments in the Bible

Even in the Old Testament the commandments were not seen as a system of morality imposed on the people The decalogue is not a code of regulations but contains the terms of God's covenant with his people. Yahweh had liberated them from bondage, made them into a nation and pledged himself to keep them in his care In response to this offer, the Israelites had to pledge themselves to an exclusive loyalty to God "I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of Egypt You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20 2f) This unique relation to God had its implications in all the spheres of life, individual and social, which are spelled out in the decalogue Only after the exile did the commandments become a legal system with extensive casuistics attached to it

Jesus places the commandments again into the original context the personal relation to God This relation is comprised in the message of God's reign, which demands the total turning to God (*metanoia*) and believing the Good News (Mk 1 15) Translated into terms of ethics it becomes the great commandment of loving God and the neighbour, a simplification difficult to grasp for the legal mind of a doctor of the law (cf Mk 12 28-33) This one commandment is given to all without any difference It is recalled in the Council "All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of love" (LG 40)

This common vocation of all followers of Jesus has to be lived in the midst of ordinary life Jesus does not want his disciples to be taken out of this world "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world" (Jn 17·15) The Rabbinic tradition, particularly among the Pharisees, insisted on separation, abstention from contaminating food and particularly from the defiling company of the pagan world Jesus' disciples are safe not by keeping aloof but by God's power· "Father, keep them safe by the power of your name" (Jn 17:11) God's reign must be realized in all spheres of human life and become the transforming leaven, the guiding orientation for a new society Thus the Christian life becomes as complex as our world in response to all its varied situations, problems, needs in which the Church has to fulfil her mission.

But the danger was very real from the beginning — it remains a threat to the Church throughout the ages: to drift away from Jesus' spirit and again "to conform to the pattern of the world" (Rom 12:2). Somewhere Christian life had to be lived in its integrity, in full freedom, as a witness to Jesus Christ in his total surrender to the Father and his self-gift to the service of his people unto death. This is the origin of religious and other forms of 'consecrated' life. It is born from the desire to live the Christian vocation in its fullness. The Council describes it. "From the very beginning of the Church there were men and women who set out to follow Christ with greater freedom and to imitate him more closely" (PC 1) They did so by following the Gospel message, "by practicing the evangelical counsels" (*ibid*).

We must, however, be cautious in simply identifying these evangelical counsels with the three vows of traditional religious life. The triad poverty, chastity and obedience occurs only in the twelfth century Life according to the Gospel, or 'evangelical counsels, simply meant in a comprehensive sense the life described in the gospels in all its dimensions If we take the three vows as the substance of religious life we can do so only if we understand them not in their limited legal content but as the focal points in which the whole gospel message is comprised 'Consecrated' persons are meant to be the living Bible, the New Testament enacted not in ancient biblical scenes but on the stage of the modern world under the conditions of today's society The three vows should not set religious families apart from the community of believers, on the contrary, "through the deeper consecration made to God in the Church religious life clearly shows and signifies the intimate nature of the Christian vocation" (AG 18) By the three vows the Christian vocation is radically realised in the three basic dimensions of human life its material basis, the social life, the professional career

Earthly life has its material basis in the many things we need to survive and to develop food, shelter, and today an ever growing multitude of items fulfilling real or imaginary needs God has given us this basis of our life, the earth and all its treasures From ancient time wealth was seen as a sign of God's special favour Yahweh gives his people a land "where you will lack nothing, where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper from the hills" (Deut 8·9) But soon the greed for property and wealth turned the people from God and destroyed Israel "They have become rich and powerful, and have grown fat and sleek, their evil deeds have no limit" (Jer 5 27)

This is also Jesus' experience wealth gives the deceptive illusion of security but it glides from our hands in the hour of death (Lk 12.16-20) The bonds of possession prove too strong when Jesus invites the young man to the fullness of life (Mk 10·17-22) Jesus does not despise the good things of this world — people actually saw him in contrast to John the Baptist's ascetical life often he is seen at banquets and he enjoys the good hospitality of Bethany His warning against wealth

does not come from a negative attitude towards the world, but he deplores the blindness of the human mind which loses the freedom for the fullness of life. Even more: wealth not only blinds the mind but enslaves the heart, it begins to dominate all spheres of life: economics, politics, media. It is the radical contrast to God's reign: "You cannot serve two masters . .. God and money" (Mt 6.24)

It is not always clear on which side the Church stands. Verbal declarations are no longer convincing For religious, committed to the Gospel, the vow of poverty has no meaning unless it is a true commitment to God's reign realised in a lifestyle of simplicity and service, in solidarity with the poor, transparent to Jesus' self-gift for us

In the understanding of chastity, too, an important change has taken place In the past the accent was placed on the renouncement of marriage Virginity was seen as a status of life higher than marriage. Often this emphasis was associated with a hangover of depreciation of the body and human love. Jesus sees it in a different perspective: marriage can be given up "for the sake of the Kingdom" (Mt 19.12). The dawn of the new creation invites to a life of total freedom. Paul too sees the motive for an unmarried life in the fuller involvement in the service of Jesus in his Church, "to be concerned about the Lord's affairs" (1 Cor 7 34) This is the perspective taken up by the Council "Chastity for the sake of the Kingdom must be esteemed as a sublime gift of grace [not as a higher status of life] for it liberates the human heart to be more fervent in the love of God and of all people" (PC 12). It will be a true witness and inspiration to all Christians, and the whole human society, when 'consecrated' people live it with joy, in a life fulfilled by true human love which binds communities together, reaches out to all and is ever transparent to the love of God who is the source of all life

Also obedience has its place in the centre of Christian life The vow of obedience the should not be seen — as it has often been in the past — as the surrender of the most precious gift that God has bestowed on us, human freedom, but as the fulfilment of the intimate desire of our heart to be united to God in solidarity with the human family Jesus was one with his Father in an obedience that led him through death to the final glory In this obedience, in the paschal mystery, he is also united to us, for it is the way of salvation for all his disciples This, then, is the meaning of religious obedience "Through their profession of obedience religious offer the full dedication of their will as a sacrifice of their self to God and through it are more permanently and securely united with God's saving will" (PC 14)

The surrender of our will, our self, can be offered only to God. The Bible knows of no surrender to another human person. However, the obedience to God is realized in the framework of the Church's authority and within the religious community, "according to the Constitutions," as it is expressed in the formula of the vows This liberates

human freedom from the bondage of privatized goals of dominating others or of seeking fulfilment in the pursuit of individual desires. The life and work of the religious are guided by the Holy Spirit to the building up of the body of Christ A single-minded concern for God's reign, common to Superiors and all members of the community, is an inspiring witness to modern society dominated by selfish careerism, competition, power struggles Society can be healed and united only if life and work are ordained to a common goal, a human family with God as its centre

Renewal of 'consecrated' life Who has to listen to the Spirit? Surely the bishops who will be assembled in Rome to reflect on 'consecrated' life in Church and the world of today They will, however, realise that religious life cannot be renewed by the hierarchy it is a charism, a gift of the Spirit The religious themselves need the awakening to the depth and significance of their vocation in today's society Not only the Superiors, but all who are committed to this form of life must listen The entire Christian community has to listen, because at stake is not only one section of Christians but the entire community of Jesus' disciples The Church's mission can be fulfilled only through an evangelical life, based on and inspired by the Gospel

J.NEUNER, S.J.

Notes

On Gender Sensitivity

A Letter from the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences informs them of a small step taken by the Church in respect to gender discrimination, in removing a little scandal from our ecclesial practice In most parishes and dioceses girls were not allowed to serve at the altar, although a number had officially or unofficially approved the new practice that went against earlier official directives Of course no dogmatic or theological justification for the discrimination could possibly be adduced The Letter informs us that the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts in the Church had authoritatively declared that among the ministries which, according to canon 230/2, can be "temporarily assigned" (i e, without "permanent investiture") to lay people, altar service is included, and that like other ministries explicity mentioned in the Canon (reader, commentator, singer) altar service too can be performed *by members of both sexes* From now on the Bishops can legitimately allow altar girls! Of course the Letter reminds the bishops that altar service has often been a factor in vocations to the priesthood: altar boys therefore should not be abolished! Let us hope that altar

girls will also find in their "new" function an inspiration for various vocations in the Church

Wags will easily see in this decision of March 15th the Catholic answer to the ordination of women in the Church of England! Nothing of the sort — and thereon hangs a tale

According to the Letter, the interpretation of the Pontifical Council was acepted on June 30th, 1992, and the Pope approved the decision on July 11th, 1992. What happened to this decision in the last 20 months? Who is responsible for this long silence? Possibly the answer to the question is that the interpretation was voted positively "according to the Instructions *to be issued* by the Apostolic See" Apparently these instructions take a long time in being formulated, and therefore the authoritative interpretation has not yet been made public in the official organ of the Holy See *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. Let us hope that the instructions will neither be nor sound offensive to men and women who in the last decades have grown sensitive to question of gender discrimination, even in language

And we have some reason to be apprehensive in the matter

According to information published in *The Tablet*, the English version of the Universal Catechism being published these days purposely uses an exclusive and man-centred language The weekly published in parallel columns some passages of the translation first presented by the English-speaking bishops, written in reasonably inclusive language, and the translation that has been substituted for that (this being the reason for the long delay in the publication of the English Catechism) One cannot but be appalled at the wilful (and unnecessary) insult to so many millions in the feminist movement! It is difficult to find any doctrinal basis for such an arbitrary decision Many of us are using in our teaching and in the liturgy the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (*Catholic* edition!) precisely because it has been written in inclusive language while remaining an accurate translation If we want to be faithful to the gender sensitivity which we believe is a gift of the Spirit, we shall not be able to use the theological source that is the Universal Catechism This is a pity And one wishes that *he* who is responsible for the decision could be made accountable for it to the English-speaking Church at large

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

The Christian Conference of Asia

Few Catholics in India seem to be aware of the very active Christian Conference of Asia which dates in its present form from 1973, although the parent body, the East Asia Christian Conference, was

founded in 1959. The purpose of the CCA is thus defined in its *Directory 1993:*

> Believing that the purpose of God for the Church in Asia is life together in common obedience to Him for the doing of His will in the world, the Christian Conference of Asia exists as an organ of continuing cooperation among Churches and National Christian Bodies in Asia within the framework of the ecumenical movement.

It is therefore a regional Council of Churches covering the nations between Korea, Pakistan and Aotearoa (New Zealand) At present its membership includes 14 National Councils of Churches and 99 Member Churches (from India, CNI, CSI, Council of Baptist Churches of the North East, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, Methodist Church of India, Presbyterian Church of India, Salvation Army, Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches and the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India)

The following nine Programme Committees indicate the wide scope of the activities of the CCA Communications, Development and Service, Education, International Affairs, Mission and Evangelism, Theological Concerns, Urban Rural Mission, Women's Concerns, Youth The CCA cooperates with many ecumenical bodies and coordinates much activity in these areas It is also the authorised representative of the WCC at the ESCAP (that recently met in Delhi with a representation also of the Holy See)

Among the publications of the CCA our readers may be interested in the following

1 **The Korean Minjung in Christ** By David Kwang-sun Suh 1991 Pp 198 A powerful statement of Korean theology and spirituality

2. **Equipping the Churches for the Healing Ministry,** 1992 Pp 105 The material of a consultation in Health, Healing and Wholeness, including a paper on the Ayurveda and creeds and codes for Christian doctors

3 **Towards Health-Care for All** CCA's Concern in Community Health 1973-1983 Pp 240 A report on work done and suggestions for future action in many areas of health care

4. **Guidelines for Development.** Ed by Harvey L Perkins 1980, 1981, 1985 Pp 95 An organised presentation of the nature and scope of development and of the Church's involvement in it

5. **Inheritors of the Earth.** Ed by Alison O'Grady, 1981 Pp 114 A Report of the Forum on People, Land and Justice, specially relevant for the problems of Indigenous Peoples

6. **Finding the Way Together** Education for Ecumenical Understanding and Action Edited by Barbara Stephens 1986 Pp 286 The orientation is the formation of an ecumenical leadership

7. **Peoples of Asia, People of God.** A Report of the Asia Mission Conference 1989 Pp 163

8. **Mission in the Context of Endemic Poverty.** Ed. by Lourdino A. Yuzon. 1983. Pp. 131. K.C. Abraham's opening paper perhaps puts the title better: "Mission in the Context of Endemic Poverty *and Affluence*." Papers of a Manila Consultation in 1982.

9. **The Mission of God in the Context of the Suffering and Struggling Peoples of Asia.** 1988, 1989 Pp. 97. Biblical reflections for the Asia Mission Conference, 1989

10. **Varieties of Witness.** Ed by D Preman Niles and T.K. Thomas 1989. Pp. 139. Four articles by M M Thomas, Aloysius Pieris, Choan-Seng Song and James H Cone, all focused on mission in Asia, followed by four Bible Studies on Human Development and six meditations.

11. **Your Will be Done.** By CCA Youth 1984, 1986. Pp 198. A collection of poems, meditations, hymns, bhajans, from many countries in Asia, beautifully illustrated

12. **C.C.A. Hymnal.** Supplement 1 1981 Pp 28 Thirty-two hymns with musical notation, coming from various parts of Asia, all rendered into English.

13. **CCA Consultation with Church Leaders from China.** 1981 Pp 80 Focused on "the changing situation of the Church in China" over a dozen years ago, this booklet presents some of the papers of an important consultation in Hong Kong where eight Christians from the People's Republic of China met with thirty-six Christians from Hong Kong and other Asian and Pacific countries

14. **Women in Asia. Status and Image** 1979 Pp 81 Chitra Fernando, Marianne Katoppo, Gabriele Dietrich, Mary John Mananzan, Phyllis Guthardt and Fumiko Yamaga speak of the situation of women The Appendix gives an account of the 1978 CCA Consultation for women.

15. **To Set at Liberty Those Who are Oppressed.** 1987 Pp. 94 It contains the Niles Memorial Lectures, Bible Studies and Testimonies that formed the material of the Eighth Assembly of the CCA in Seoul in 1985 Sri Lankan Daniel T Niles was one of the 'founding fathers' of the CCA in 1959 and its General Secretary from 1959 to 1968 He died in 1970

16. **Building a Just and Convivial World.** 1990 Pp. 51 The Niles Memorial Lectures presented at the Ninth CCA Conference in Manila.

The CCA could be compared (and contrasted!) with the FABC, as it covers a similar geographic area Let us hope that Catholics become more aware of the power for the Gospel that the CCA represents and that more serious ecumenical cooperation with it develops According to the Directory 1993, the offices of the Christian Conference of Asia are now in Pak Tin Village, Mei Tin Road, Shatin, N T, Hong Kong, Tel (852)691 1068, Fax (852) 692 3805, Cable Chrisconas, Hong Kong, Telex 37618 URM HX.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Book Reviews

On Matthew and Mark

The Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 1:1-7·29 and 8 1-12 50) By Michael NAICKANPARAMBIL, C Ss R. Bangalore BCC Secretariat, NBCLC, 1992-93, Pp 64 and 33 N p

We have reviewed earlier booklets from the *Bible Correspondence Course* and stressed their quality and clarity The author wrote the booklets on Mark These booklets on Mathew are 8 and 9 in the series and are of the same quality and orientation as the earlier ones These will be no doubt two more booklets on Matthew — we hope this year

The author follows the Historical Critical Method (HCM) in his exposition and so the booklets are informative and explain the text. There are added reflections which relate some aspects of text units to life, and questions for personal/group integration of the meaning of the text into life

The reader needs to know some technical language As this is the third set of booklets (Mark and Luke are complete) the author presumes that the reader is adequately acquainted with modern Gospel study

Though I would at times explain a text with different nuances emphasize particular themes and use a narrative approach to the text as well as the HCM, yet I highly recommend these booklets for the quality of exposition, their clarity and continued attempts to stimulate the process of integrating the Word and life Perhaps greater awareness of India her religious culture and socio-economic situations could enter more explicitly into the exposition and reflections

P M MEAGHER, S J

The Gospel of Matthew By Daniel J HARRINGTON, S J Collegeville The Liturgical Press, 1991. Pp. xiii-429. $ 29.95 ISBN 0-8146-5803-2.

Initially I wish to inform to our readers who do not know it that The Liturgical Press inherited from Michael Glazier among other valuable series a new commentary series entitled *Sacra Pagina* I have seen Matthew, Luke, Acts and Galatians and intend to ensure that the whole series is in our library

Each commentary presents a fresh translation of the biblical text and a modern exposition, using clearly defined methodologies and emphasizing exposition. If all the volumes are of the standard of this commentary then students and teachers will be served in a significant manner

The specific focus and contribution of Harrington's *Matthew* is the careful, continuous and informed attention given to the "Jewish" dimension of this Gospel Harrington attends to this dimension on three levels (a) the information about OT texts/Jewish texts which have influenced or are at the background of Matthew's text, (b) the situation in which Matthew wrote namely the intra-Jewish conflicts, after the destruction of Jerusalem, about the nation and its continuation of Judaism, (c) the way how such a Gospel can be actualized today without nourishing anti-semitic feelings, as Matthew's Gospel has an anti-semitic potential He concludes his remarks on this point saying: "The focus of the work is on Matthew as a Jewish text — Jewish in its conceptual and rhetorical assumptions, in its sociological setting, and in its theological message" (p 2) He choses not to burden the reader with all possible Jewish background material but wants to provide that material which will enable readers to understand what the text meant about the 80s to Matthew's community in its conflicts with Jewish rivals Readers could prof-

itably refer to George Keeran's extensive review of Overman's book on the social world of Matthew as Harrington shares many similar ideas (*VJTR* March 1994, 192-199)

Harrington does not accept that the rupture between Matthew's community and the Synagogue had taken place (differing from Meier), agrees that Palestine could be the locale of its origin (differs from many scholars, agrees with Overman), judges that the community was largely though not exclusively, Jewish (Overman is more exclusive, Meier more Gentile) and that the anonymous author had a strong Jewish background and obviously knew Greek.

The commentary follows a literary, historical and theological approach — aspects of the historical critical method but modified Though aware of modern literary approaches (as found in Heil and Davis), of the value of form criticism, source criticism, the Synoptic parallel comparisons and the search for the historical Jesus and events behind the Gospel, yet the author limits the scope of his commentary

The commentary follows this pattern A A translation of the text with no textual notes, B Notes on the text (words, phrases), of an exegetical nature, C Interpretation — an exposition of the text, with emphasis on the Jewish background and setting, and its actualization for today

I used this commentary for a course and was very satisfied I like particularly the judicious and informed exegetical notes and the richness of the exposition. Harrington attempts to listen to the text with the ears of members of Matthew's community caught up in the great search for identity within the continuity of the Jewish religious tradition He then wants to listen with the ears of present day Christians Though antisemitism is not a problem in India, yet we must listen to the Gospel within a world of other living faiths. I highly recommend this commentary — among the best on Matthew for theological students.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

The Vision of Matthew. Christ, Church, and Morality in the First Gospel. By John P. MEIER New York. Crossroad, 1991 Pp viii-270. $ 4 17. ISBN 0-8245-1092-5

This is a reprint of a 1979 study by a Matthean expert The vision of Matthew is constructed around his reinterpretation of saving history and specifically of Jesus' death and resurrection within an apocalyptic world view where in Jesus as Son of God and Son of man inaugurates the Last Age to be concluded with his second coming The community of believers, free of the limitations of race, nation and Mosaic Law, belongs to the New Age and awaits for the final judgment. Obedience to the teaching of Jesus will be the criterion of judgment The teaching of Jesus and Jesus the Teacher are inseparable All the believers' life is moulded by Matthew's eschatology and Jesus' moral teaching So Christ, Church and morality are intimately related

Having spelt out his understanding of Matthew's vision, Meier comments upon the Gospel divided into five books (chs 3-7, 7:28-11 1, 11 1-13 53, 13.53-19·1 and 19·1-26:1) with a Prologue (1-2) and the Passion Death, Resurrection, the turning point of the Ages (26-28) He describes his own style of commentary as a Mini-Commentary where he deals with segments of the narrative and discourses and indicates how Matthew reworks his sources in the light of the situation of his community, gradually producing a story with an overarching theological vision. This is not a verse by verse study The concluding section (pp 221-264) studies explicitly the Matthean emphases in Jesus' teaching based on 5 17-20 and 5.21-48 and is called *Remodeling Morality: The Eschatological Demand of Christ*

Meier judges the author to be a

Gentile Christian and the community to be situated in a Syrian urban centre of Jewish-Christian culture and becoming more predominantly Gentile in composition (probably Antioch).

This redactional study of Matthew made in dialogue with other redactional studies, especially the work of Kingsbury, will help students and teachers mine the riches of this Gospel tradition. Teachers will differ with interpretative decisions yet the work of Meier must be taken into account the study of Matthew

Paddy MEAGHER, S J

Matthew By Margaret DAVIES Sheffield JSOT Press, 1993 Pp 224 £ 30 ISBN 1-85075-432-2

I am not too sure how to describe this commentary belonging to the JSOT series entitled "Readings A New Biblical Commentary" The dominant methodological approach is a type of Narrative Criticism and Reader Response Approach Davies wants to highlight the major rhetorical conventions and strategies used by the author to guide the reader s (Implied Reader) response A competent reader of the Gospel today needs a good knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures, the other Gospels and some non-canonical literature, besides a knowledge of the land culture and the economic-political setup of the time Davies analyses how the reader reads a text and how a modern reader can read ancient texts This is a useful section in the Introduction

She discusses the way Matthew's Gospel is a 'historical narrative' though it gives no detailed description of the socio-political environment of the period and is meagre in its geographical and locale description The normal cause-effect relationship between incidents and events is lacking, though there is a theological link where God is the principal actor to whom the human must respond. There is no sociological analysis. The Narrator is omniscient and omnipresent The Gospel is an incomplete account of Jesus' life. Finally, a major thread throughout the story is created by the place the Scriptures have in the development of the narrative

I found this introduction from an Narrative perspective insightful and helpful

When I read the actual commentary I am confused, as I find a type of narrative exposition, informative but detached Then there is a constant comparison of Matthew with Mark and Luke — an element of the historical critical method. There is also a continuous discussion of historical data yet there is little exegesis While Hail has one part of the narrative throw light on another within Matthew so that a cumulative narrative effect is produced, to a great extent, Davies lacks this though she constantly refers to other texts in Matthew The commentary seems to fall between various types of commentary expositions and is somewhat acontextual as it does not explicitly dialogue with the believer today at any length Yet at many places Davies does ask the reader what meaning would such and such a text have for today

The strength of the commentary is the emphasis given to exposition following the narrative unfolding of the Gospel and the constant enquiry about how the original readers (actually they were listeners, not readers) would have heard the narrative A narrative approach to Matthew is somewhat difficult because of the extensive collections of teaching material in the five or six discourses when the story moves very slowly and the teaching becomes the focal point.

Working through the Gospel with this commentary as guide, teachers and students will be forced to look at the text and they will be informed and enlightened Though expensive, the commentary is worth the investment as

it does bring out a fresh and new reading of this Gospel.

Paddy MEAGHER,S.J.

Out of the Treasure. The Parables in the Gospel of Matthew. By Jan LAMBRECHT, S.J GrandRapids/Louvain Wm. B. Eerdmans/Peeters Press, 1991 Pp 299 $ 24.49. ISBN 90-6831-161-1

This excellent study belongs to the *Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs* series. Some readers must know of Lambrecht's earlier book on Jesus' parables, *Once More Astonished The Parables of Jesus* (1981/83 Crossroad) An updated revision of the chapters on the parables Mt 24-25 is included here The remainder of the book comes out from much teaching and writing on Matthew's parables

The short opening chapter deals with the parables in Matthew in a more general way from the perspective of sources, types and rhetoric The other chapters study a single parable except the chapter on the collection in Mt 13 1-52 The parables are grouped contextually A — chs 18-20 (Mt 18 12-14, 23-35 and 20 1-16), B — chs 21-22, (21 28-32.33-34 and 22 2-14), C — Mt 13 1-52, D — chs 24-25 (24 45-51, 25 1-13 14-30) and E — 25 31-36 However the study of each parable is an independent unit in itself

The method of study is relatively uniform and would fall under the rubric of the Historical Critical Method though without much technical jargon and footnotes for scholars Normally Lambrecht makes a detailed study of the various forms of the parable (when there are parallels) in the Gospels, Q and at times Thomas. This is followed by an attempt to trace the parable back to Jesus and the setting in his ministry The other major aspect included in the study is the specific Matthean emphasis or redaction. This is the major goal of all the previous work on the individual parables, their redaction by the other Evangelists and the reconstruction of the parable in the unwritten sources and Jesus' ministry. At times the process of interpretation is prolonged into a suggested actualization of the parable for today

I am not going to enter into a discussion of exegetical points on source criticism. The work is very thorough and careful, yet not abstrusely scholarly. Beginners will be daunted by the source critical sections and reconstruction of Jesus' parable/similitude and yet appreciate and profit from the exposition of Matthew's meaning and theology. There is plenty of exposition which uncovers major themes of Matthew's interpretation of Jesus, his ministry and discipleship

For more serious students and teachers the book is a model for a careful, judicious and fruitful use of the HCM There are select bibliographic suggestions for further study, sufficient titles being in English Teaching Matthew recently I found the book very useful

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

The Death and Resurrection of Jesus. A Narrative-Critical Reading of Matthew 26-28 By John Paul HEIL. Minneapolis Fortress Press, 1991 Pp xi-126 $ 9 95 ISBN 0-8006-2514-5

This study of the Passion is based upon a reading of the Gospel from the perspective of narrative criticism and more specifically a Reader-Response method of analysis (cf *VJTR* 1992, 665-68) Heil analyses and describes the multiplicity of literary patterns and dynamic design of Matthew in narrating the Passion story, to ascertain how the reading of the text has to affect the "Implied Reader." From this type of literary analysis we can uncover and hear the message communicated by the "Implied Author "

As you read the book you are aware of Heil's familiarity with every minute nuance in the text as well as the major threads of thought. The liter-

ary analysis is very thorough and you are surprised what you have missed so much in your repeated reading and study of the text. The analysis is not philological nor exegetical, nor historico-critical but literary (the rhetoric, the narrative, the literary interrelatedness through words, phrases, ideas, contrasts, stylistic traits.) The author seeks to uncover and bring to light "the rhetorical effects" the text produces for its implied reader" (p 1)

Heil presents initially a narrative structure of the Passion — three main sections (26 1-56, 26.57-27 54 and 27 55-28:20), each with nine scenes "that function together as a dynamic progression of seven narrative intercalations or 'sandwiches' In other words, each main section of nine scenes progresses as an interchanging sequence of seven a-b-a or b-a-b narrative sandwiches" (p 2) Diagrams are given of this narrative interlacing (pp 2-6)

Prior to the actual study of the Passion, Heil surveys the narrative dynamic of the Gospel and the presentation of Jesus as saviour, God-with-us, the true King, Son of God and the Nazarean from Galilee, of John the Baptist whose death foreshadowed Jesus', Jesus' conflict with the Jewish authorities and his prediction of his Passion and Resurrection from the dead This provides the larger narrative backdrop for the careful and detailed analysis of chs 26-28

Anyone following Heil's analysis will learn a lot about the Gospel and Matthew's Passion There is a constant process of interrelating one small section, a theme, an idea, a stylistic trait, actors in the drama, quotations/allusions to Scripture, the action of the narrative as it unfolds, with similar elements in the Gospel and in the Passion narrative itself The reader is left with the impression of a purposeful 'intricate and dynamic design' in Matthew's narrative

I have one reservation which could be illustrated from many texts and from the proposed detailed structure. I judge *at times* Heil sees too much, presents too much tidiness and purposefulness, overreads the rhetorical traits and seems to squeeze the last drop from texts Therefore, a reader/student needs some reservations about aspects of what Heil sees the Implied Author communicating to the Implied Reader However, read in conjunction with other studies of the Passion or good commentaries, this study will open up new riches in Matthew's interpretation of Jesus Christ and his passion, death and resurrection

Paddy MEAGHER, S J

The Gospel According To Saint Mark. By Morna D HOOKER Peabody Hendrickson Publishers/London. A & C Black Publishers Ltd, 1991 Pp viii-424 $ 24 95 ISBN 1-56563-011-6

This excellent commentary is part of *Black's New Testament Commentary* series Hooker situates her commentary within the continuum of the commentary genre running from the source critical work of Taylor to the reader's point of view approach illustrated by Belo She uses a modified form of the redactional and literary approaches as she concentrates on the text as it is from a holistic perspective and searches to discover what Mark, pastor and theologian, wanted to convey to his readers as a congregation who heard the Gospel

The Introduction is well worth reading as Hooker has a balanced judgment on the issues we expect in the Introduction to a commentary The Gospel was written between 65-75 by some "Mark" somewhere in the Roman Empire' She correctly insists that as it is difficult to separate clearly the historical Jesus and the interpretation of Jesus, so also it is very hard to separate the tradition received by Mark and Markan interpretation. She surveys Form and Redaction studies of Mark, accepts the two source hypothesis with qualifications and sees no compelling reason to judge that the "antagonistic model" is

needed to explain the reason for Mark's Gospel. Rather she prefers to see the Gospel as addressed to a community which must come to grips with the mystery of suffering.

Two well written section describe The Shape of the Gospel (structure) and The Theology of Mark. She gives a detailed outline (pp 27-29) with eight parts (1·1-13; 1:14-3:6; 3:7-6:6a; 6·6b-8:21; 8:27-10:52; 11.1-13.37, 14.1-15:47, 16:1-8). Such structuring is our construct as Mark was heard and he used various devices like repetitions, summaries, recapitulations, variations on a theme, transitional units, juxtaposition of similar themes .. to bind the narrative together and hold the attention of the listeners Mk 1·1-13 — the prologue — is important as it allows readers to see the heart of the story from the perspective of God and guides them in their listening

Hooker insists on the centrality of Jesus and how narratives and not titles explain the Christology Of course she develops the themes of discipleship, lack of understanding, importance of Jesus' death and the reasons for it, the new community and Israel's condemnation she warns against caricaturing the Torah.

The commentary itself is clear, precise, expository, and detailed She makes her own translation, briefly outlines the thought of a passage, studies it in detail with references to the Greek text, and gathers together some significant points before moving to the next passage She follows the narrative, provides adequate and appropriate background information and critiques other authors insightfully There are a number of informative notes the baptism of John, the Messianic secret, miracles, the Son of Man, parables and a note on Mark 13.

This will be the commentary I will use the next time I teach Mark, an excellent commentary within its scope.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

The Beginning of the Gospel. Probings of Mark in Context. By Adela Yarbro COLLINS. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992. Pp xii-171. $ 10.95. ISBN 0-8006-2622-2.

This is a collection of Collins' essays on aspects of Mark's Gospel. The initial essay on the Genre of this Gospel critiques various proposed genres ("Gospel", Biography) and argues for the designation of *history* with the qualification of apocalyptic, I agree with the narrative/story character of Mark and the importance of apocalyptic yet I do not think her proposal helps more than other suggested genres to understand Mark. Though there are aspects in the Gospel similar to Jewish and Hellenistic writings, yet there is a definite "newness" in the genre of Gospel

The study of the exorcisms and healing ministry of Jesus through which he shares in and manifests God's power and compassion and of the problem of Jesus' and the disciples' sufferings is valuable I judge that many NT "scholars" would approach the questions of the factual reality of the spirit world, exorcisms and healing and the multidimension of such ministry in a more adequate way were they to spend time in Indian, Asian or African villages

There is a chapter on Mk 13, the Marcan Passion and the Marcan presentation of the Empty Tomb and Resurrection

The question posed in the study of the Passion is the source critical question about the existence of a pre-Markan passion narrative. Having surveyed prior studies beginning with Schmidt (1918) up to Green (1988), Collins argues, using a source critical methodology, that Mk 14:32-15:35 depends on a pre-Markan narrative while 14:1-31 is composed by Mark from traditional sources like other parts of the Gospel. Jesus was presented like the traditional suffering just person whose death was not interpreted in terms of atonement. Collins argues carefully. Such studies

are for few readers.

Mk 16:1-8 is studied against the background of various attempts to speak about the resurrection and Greco-Roman traditions of the destiny of special people at the end of their "lives." Collins insists correctly that any study of the biblical texts must precede from the perspective of history and the literary character of the text. She argues that 16:1-8 is a unified composition created by Mark which attempts to affirm the resurrection in a way intelligible to readers within of Greco-Roman background more than a Jewish one The model is the translation from grave to heaven with a transformed body Her exegetical study of 1 Cor 15 and the Markan text is well done I doubt whether the translation model is the important background for Mark's empty tomb narrative

The studies are historico-critical and such studies have less appeal and relevance for many students of the Gospel today, yet they are needed Those collected here are well done and useful within the limited scope of this method

Paddy MEAGHER, S J

Bible Study Helps

A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature. General Editor David Lyle JEFFREY Grand Rapids Wm B Eerdmans, 1992 Pp xxxii-960 $ 79 99 ISBN 85244-244-6

There are over 900 articles in this dictionary which include major entries and short identification entries. There are also abundant cross reference entries.

The longer entries have three parts the word or phrase (a) as found in the Bible, their identification and background, and (b) in the significant commentary of the large Christian/Jewish tradition; (c) as used in English literature, chronologically presented according to significant strands of literary development from the Middle Ages onwards.

The entries themselves can be gathered under six general categories (1) Biblical proper nouns (Patmos, Lamech, Uriah the Hittite), (2) common nouns (incest, heart, golden rule, fall, apple, millstone), (3) concepts (omniscience, predestination, blindness, Immaculate Conception, (4) Common quotations or allusions (by their fruits, children of light, greater love hath no man...), (5) parables (the good samaritan the rich fool), (6) familiar terms in Hebrew, Greek and Latin (Imago Dei, in principio, Jesu, dulcis memoria, Eli, Eli ., Kyrie eleison, Shalom)

Together with all the Dictionary entries (pp 1-856) there are the following bibliographies of biblical studies A *Biblical Studies* A1 A Guide to Biblical Studies for the Student of Literature, A2 Studies of the Bible as Literature A Select List, A3 The English Bible A Brief History of Translation B *The History of Biblical Interpretation* B1 Historical Studies in Biblical Hermeneutics, B2 A Checklist of Biblical Commentaries Available to English Authors (according periods), B3 A Checklist of Bibliographies of Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Scriptural Commentaries C *Biblical Tradition in English Literature* C1 The Influence of the Bible on English Literature Selected General Studies, C2 Use of the Bible by a Single Author or Group of Authors

The biblical texts are normally quoted according to the King James (Authorized) Version, which was for so long used by English writers The language in inclusive as far as is possible and there are lists of entries, contributors and abbreviations

The notes attached to these bibliographies and the bibliographic information are very useful and enable students to pursue a more specialized study of the Bible and English literature.

The information gathered here, contributed by experts in various areas of biblical studies, history and literature, is enormous To have such infor-

mation — some of which is found in widely scattered books and articles — within two covers is a great service to both biblical students and students of literature The presentation is excellent.

The Bible is the most influential single "book" on the culture and literature of the English speaking world However the influence is more and more unconscious and often unrecognized, as many readers of English literature do not know the Bible I was amazed a few years ago in a Church in Siena to listen to the questions a group of young Americans were asking about paintings depicting or dependent upon biblical narratives and thought They had never read a Bible

The Dictionary ought to be a major reference work for serious students and teachers of English literature in Universities and to students of the Bible and their teachers I wonder whether some of India's better University libraries know of the existence of the Dictionary Though expensive, the Dictionary is a good investment for good theological and University libraries

Paddy MEAGHER, S J

DISCOVERING THE LIVING WORD Series

Discovering Old Testament Origins: The Books of Genesis, Exodus and Samuel By Margaret Nutting RALPH New York/Mahwah. Paulist Press, 1992 Pp vi-319 $ 12 95 ISBN 0-8091-3322-9

This is the first of a series of text books meant for beginners in the study of Scripture (In my experience first year theologians, both men and women religious, are beginners with regard to an intelligent basic understanding of Scripture.) The format of the series may seem simple yet the attitude to the Bible, the type of information and basic principles of interpretation presented are quite "sophisticated."

Nutting Ralph rightly insists that students *first* read the *whole* biblical book itself without notes, and note down the questions which arise in the process of reading.

From her teaching experience she has formulated typical questions which she has been asked, (e.g., How does the author know how the world was created? Is it just that the author is inspired? (Gen 1·1-24). There are twenty-five questions for Genesis, twenty for Exodus ... The answers to these questions introduce the student into the world of modern biblical study and in the process uncover the students' presuppositions/misunderstanding and educate them This implies providing all types of information about culture, history, geography, the Bible as literature, the ongoing processes of rewriting, how the books originated, sources, literary forms, ways to interpret . Ralph uses charts to illustrate, simplify and inform Each "chapter" (called Article in the book) is followed by questions on the content and discussion questions which often call upon the readers own human experience and concerns so as to understand and to an extent actualize the biblical text

I wondered why Nutting Ralph jumps from Exodus to Samuel She wants students to become familiar in this book with both the Pentateuch (exemplified by Gen/Ex) and the Deuteronomist History (exemplified by Samuel) with a few explanatory pages. The content is excellent for an introductory stage, offering the fruits of good contemporary biblical study, simplified and presented with great clarity The glossary (298-309) explains terms which will be strange for beginners Though introductory, yet the standard of biblical literacy is so low among many Christian that theological libraries, religious houses of formation and Parish libraries ought to have the series. Teachers will appreciate such textbooks. Also Christian English medium Colleges could use them with great profit.

Discovering The Gospels: Four Accounts of the Good News. By Margaret Nutting RALPH. New York/Mahwah. Paulist Press, 1990 Pp. vi-283. $ 11 95
ISBN 0-8091-3200-1.

This is the first book of the NT series. Nutting Ralph observes that most Christians know the Gospels (all Scripture) as small, often unrelated pieces, the pericopes chosen for the Sunday or daily readings. She could also have added that most Christians miss so much of the riches of the Gospels (Bible) because of their ignorance about the *nature* of these sacred texts

Again the authoress insists that students first read the whole text and note their queries. She introduces students to the four Gospels using the same method of questions and responses which go far beyond the questions because she uncovers the presuppositions on which questions are based and these often have to be enlarged, corrected, reoriented She discusses in the articles on the four Gospel all the major and necessary areas of Gospel study which enable students to be biblically literate I shall not go into these areas as anyone acquainted with modern Gospel study would know what has been included

Again this book is pedagogically sound, biblically informative, reliable and clear — another good text book following the same format Again I recommend this to theological libraries, houses of formation, parishes and English medium Colleges The books are good value

We hope to be able to inform readers about the availability of further volumes.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J

HEAR THE WORD Series
Introducing the Cultural Context of the Old Testament and Introducing the Cultural Context of the New Testament. By John PILCH. New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1991. Pp. xiv-212; xiv-254. $ 14.95 each.
ISBN 0-8091-3271-0/3272-9.

These are volumes of the *Hear the Word* set. They are adult biblical workbooks for students who want to acquire a deeper knowledge of the Mediterranean cultural world which formed the cultural background for the Bible as a whole and for Jesus of Nazareth. They were written because 20th century readers so easily listen to, read and interpret the translated Bible from within their own culture and in their own language and unconsciously they read within the culture of the language they use all day

The books are *workbooks*. Pilch insists that students must read every biblical text given in each "lesson" and I realized you must do this if you have to follow the questions attached to the text and learn. Each lesson (session is the author's word) would take at least two hours for an individual to cover properly There are three parts, 1 Preparation Some aspect of American Culture, 2 The Lesson. Study of an aspect/aspects of Mediterranean culture as found in biblical texts, 3 Follow-up Illustration(s) of the major point(s) made in the lesson Each volume has one lesson (Guidelines for Interpretation) which presents the teaching of the Church in recent documents about how to interpret the Bible and illustrates each main point with concrete texts of the OT or NT These are well done

The other lessons concentrate on the culture (used in a broad sense) of the Mediterranean world I wondered at times whether adequate attention was given to the specific ways these cultural characteristics found expression within the Palestinian world at various periods in the long history of the Bible (1000 BC to 100 AD) However, the more I read the more I became aware of my own ignorance of many of the specific traits of the culture of that whole region.

Unless we make a very conscious effort — and many do not make this effort — we impose upon the biblical world alien cultures. An example is the way we describe the values of Jesus/ Kingdom in terms of justice, equality, freedom, fellowship .. terms which are filled with the cultural outlook of 20th century democracy Also when we use the words poor, marginalized, oppressed, liberation, caste, Dalit we are likely to miss cultural aspects of the biblical world and impose our culture

The author is writing explicitly for American (USA) Christians whose culture is obviously very different to the culture of the Mediterranean basin Therefore all the examples are from the United States This does initially create problems for students from other cultural regions However, with a little reflection students can explore their own cultural presuppositions which often they impose on the text

The author correctly begins volume 2 with a reflection on *How Do You Read* When we read narratives or discourses we create much of the story or the instruction from our world I remember writing letters to Australia from India years ago while having "tea" at roadside "hotels" I use to imagine how my parents imagined a "hotel" and "tea," aware that they would create a scene which would be totally false

Pilch introduces the student to the cultural world where *honour-shame* are pervasive and where these are dominant values, where conflict and deception are important, where much of life is public He describes the economic world of limited goods, patronage, kinship relationships, sharing as opposed to greed He discusses the value system of activity (doing, being, being-becoming), the value system of relationships (individualism, group/collateral, lineal/hierarchical) and the attitudes to time (our relation to the past, present or the future) He insists on the importance of group identity (dyadic personality), describes types of parenting and the importance of status and roles.

He also explains the meaning of symbolic terms (salt), the types of houses and customs, and the cultural presuppositions of Wisdom literature which we must grasp to understand its sayings (culturally conditioned behaviour, language, attitudes [age, gender, social class .]) There are many other features of Mediterranean culture to be found Students/teachers have to work through the books which complement each other Only through personal work can we begin to conscientize ourselves so that we are more sensitive to the cultural contexts of the biblical texts and so more able to interpret our Scripture adequately I recommend the workbooks to teachers and students. Bibliographies at the end of each lesson open up the extensive study being made of sociocultural contexts of the Bible

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Jesus Christ: His Life and His Church. New Testament Introduction 1 By Margaret BAXTER Delhi: ISPCK, 1983 (SPCK 1987) Pp x-144 Rs 35 ISBN 81-7214-1416

Many of our readers are familiar with the *ISPCK Study Guide* Series. The title of the book may mislead some The study guide is an Introduction to the NT and not a book on Christology This guide introduces students to the land and culture of Jesus of Nazareth (ch 2), the Jewish ways in which Jesus taught (ch 3), the central events of his Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension (ch 4) studied from a historico-theological perspective, and the birth of the "Jesus Movement" and its earliest growth (ch 5) This informative survey based on sound contemporary biblical study is followed by a study of the letters in the NT One chapter is devoted to letter writing and another introduces briefly each letter in the NT. The final chapter explains NT eschatology as a background to introduce students to the Apocalypse

(Book of Revelation).

Each chapter is followed by the usual *Study Suggestions* which include Words and Meanings, Review of Content; Bible Study; Further Study and Discussion This is the point when the students are asked to allow the Word come to life today and affect their lives

A sound introduction which focuses on content and meaning more than the other concerns of many Introductions, that is clear, sound in its approach and context and so inexpensive cannot but be recommended, and the same can be said of the twenty-four books of the series already published Houses of Formation, Parish Libraries, Bible Schools, discussion groups and theological Institutes can all afford the books of this series which are written with Asia-Africa as their context

Paddy MEAGHER, S J

Dudhari Talwar Romiyon tatha Philemon ke nam Pauliye Patron ka Bhashya Commentator St Thomas Aquinas Trans Father Amaladas Ranchi Catholic Hindi Sahitya Sabha, 1993 Pp x-635 Rs 300 (Available at Catholic Press Ranchi)

A translation in Hindi of a Latin commentary on a great Pauline letter from the tradition of medieval scholatic exegesis by one of the great theologian of the Western Church — for what purpose? This has been my reaction as I went through tasting pieces of this commentary

I can see a purpose to make available a great theologian's commentary on a letter which has profoundly affected Christian thought Anyone must admire the hours of labour and perseverance of Fr Amaladas. The commentary is probably one of the great commentries of that period in the Christian study of Scripture. The commentary is very very thorough, an "exegetical" exposition, verse by verse, and reflects the theological insights of Thomas Aquinas and a compendium of centuries of western "exegesis."

I am not able to judge the quality of the translation. The historical value of the commentary is obvious However, I judge the Hindi speaking Christian communities of all the churches in the North would be served better, considering the limited number of writers and the limited number of good Hindi biblical books available, by translations of reliable, adequately scholarly recent commentaries on the New Testament This translation ought to be in all theological libraries in the Hindi speaking churches — Catholic, Church of North India and other churches

Paddy MEAGHER, S J

Note *We regret to inform our readers that Fr Amaladas, a saintly priest of the diocese of Raigarh, passed away in December last year One of his unfulfilled dreams was the publication of a series of Aquinas's commentaries in Hindi which he was confident the Catholic Hindi Sahitya Sabha would willingly bring out The volume reviewed above was published a few months before his death and is a testimony to the tenacity of his vision The Church in North India owes Fr Amaladas a debt of gratitude for the publication of many books and booklets in Hindi, original works or translations of important publications, including some papal writings R I P*

Editors.

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Vol. LVIII JULY 1994 No. 7

VJTR 58 (1994) 409-419

Social Justice from a Judeo-Christian Perspective

Let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like an overflowing stream (Amos 5:24)

Seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness,
And all these things shall be yours as well (Mt 6:33)

Dr V. DEVASAHAYAM

As a background to the Social Justice Sunday on August 21st we offer to our readers a biblical meditation on the theme of Justice by an Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Dalit Theology at the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College (94, Purasawalkan High Rd, Madras 600010). In the first part the author reflects on the bibical concept of justice which is "biased" towards the oppressed and does not leave sinners out of its scope In the second part some important Christian symbols of justice are presented God as the just King, humanity as God's Image, the Kingdom of God, the Cross and the Resurrection, Worship as Justice

The theme Social Justice is a crucial and relevant one in our contemporary Indian context. There is cry for justice almost from every quarter of our globe, a cry against several manifestations of injustice such as colonialism, economic exploitation, social discrimination on the basis of caste, race, sex, religion, language, etc , tyrannies of old social conventions and religious practices, ignorance, illiteracy . All suffering is bitter and the unjust suffering is doubly bitter. Injustice affects the life of the spirit and eats into one's personality. It breeds strife and indignation Injustice deprives people of their rights, privileges and happiness In our immediate context, the reversal of the very principle of justice is hailed as upholding of justice Wrong is done in the name of right; disorder is praised as the principle of

order. It is this kind of cynical interpretation of injustice as justice that constitutes the grave danger of our times.

Religions in the past have supported reactionary forces that want to conserve the status quo. Some of these forces have today become more powerful and make use of religion and politics to subvert the revolutionary fervour. It is my conviction that the wrongs of religious traditions have been allowed a free play to create strife and division in Indian society, whereas their right strengths have not yet been adequately summoned to build a healthy and just social order. It is imperative that we identify the liberative streams, the revolutionary urges and the prophetic elements available in the different religious traditions, and bring them to bear on the human struggles for establishing social justice in India.

There is yet a deeper reason for the involvement of religious traditions in our concern and struggle for social justice. Religions represent God as law-giver and the Guardian of the right order, and seek to establish the truth that justice is of its nature holy and that it stands above the humans. I affirm that the recognition of the divine or transcendental dimension of justice should become an integral part of human search and struggle for justice John Calvin, a Christian theologian, once remarked "There is no doubt that certain notions of right and justice are innate in the human mind and that a light of justice shines in them."[1] Justice is seen here as an instinctive insight. But we must admit that the social systems we create are only relatively just and even they become possible only when they are guided by an idea of divine justice We need an understanding of divine justice as absolute to serve as a norm for our understanding of justice ("Nothing can be measured with an elastic yardstick") If there is no idea of eternal, divine justice there is no possibility of denouncing violations of justice by the powerful. If there is no justice transcending the state, then the state can declare anything it likes to be law There is no limit to its arbitrariness. George Mendenhall rightly observes: "The social purpose of a really transcendent God is to have a court of appeal gainst the highest courts and orders of society around us."[2]

[1]See E. BRUNNER, *Justice and the Social Order*, ch 2.

[2]See also W BRUEGGEMANN, Jr., *The Prophetic Imagination*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978.

I. Biblical Understanding of Justice

1 Justice an Integral Part of the Term Christian

Christian and just imply each other. The term "Christ" which means the anointed one, is a title given to the historical person called Jesus of Nazareth. He was called Jesus the Christ. Originally the term Christian was used in its adjectival function of describing the nature of the person of Jesus called the Christ. Jesus was the anointed one, anointed to bring about the just rule of God in history. Jesus proclaims:

The spirit of the Lord is upon me
Because he has *anointed* me to preach the good news to the poor
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
And recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Lk 4 18-19).

Therefore to be a Christian means to be in the world in such a way as to bring about justice or to work towards the realisation of the divine polity of justice initiated by Jesus Christ.

2 *Justice Universal and Inclusive Dimensions*

The Bible recognizes human solidarity in sin: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God " Sin is often spoken of in the Bible in its corporate sense. The prophets of the Old Testament as well as Jesus condemn the unjust structures of collectivities in their times and criticize the privatization of religion which restricts religion to the individual and interior spheres. In our global village the violation of rights in one part of the world is often stimulated and maintained by other parts of the world. Economic justice in India cannot be achieved without working for a new international economic order. The work of Jesus Christ is described as "a triumph over principalities and powers" (Col 2:15) and "the elemental spirits of the universe" (Gal 4:3), the overcoming of sin in all its collective and structural aspects. Jesus' parable of the judgement of "the nations" recorded in Matthew 25 also reiterates that the collectivities will be judged.

In the Bible we find one of the earliest national liberation movements recorded in history, the deliverance of Israelite slaves from their Egyptian bondage. God is manifested as one who establishes justice. The Bible speaks of the universality of God's liberative and just activity. Prophet Amos presents God as saying: "Are you not like Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel?, says the Lord. Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt,

and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?" (9:7). Recognising God's universal concern for establishing a just social order, the different groups should not claim special rights and privileges which are denied to others. The words of Niemoeller are worth remembering: "God is not the enemy of my enemies. God is not even the enemy of His own enemies."[3]

The just society is described as one which guarantees and maximises the well-being of all its members. It includes prosperity, security, freedom, peace, dignity ... "Everyone under his vine and under his fig tree" (1 Kings 4:25). The poverty of the many is only one tragic consequence of injustice. Instead of working for a purely economic growth we need to work for economic and social justice, self-reliance and the people's participation at different levels of decision-making. The dichotomy between political and civil rights and the economic, social and cultural rights must be done away with, for rights are as indivisible as the notion of justice itself.

3. *Justice as Relationship in Community*

The biblical understanding of justice goes beyond its narrow connotation of doing right action according to some ethical or moral code Justice refers to one's faithfulness to relationships in the community It is significant that the notion of justice emerges only within the context of relationships, between God and humans and between one another Justice refers to a mutual acknowledgement of persons, mutual maintenance of one another's honour and dignity, and helping each to play his or her part in the life of the community In this understanding of the meaning of justice, some actions apparently violative of moral code would still be upheld as an act of justice.

The story of Tamar recorded in Genesis 38 is interpreted to bring out this truth[4] Tamar becomes a widow without an issue. According to Jewish custom one of her husband's brothers should raise an offspring to the dead brother through his widow Judah, the father-in-law, has a responsibility of seeing that one of his sons fulfil this responsibility. But Judah failed to do it. Tamar put on a veil on her face, dressed herself like a harlot and waited at the wayside. Passing that way Judah took her to be a harlot

[3]See Donald W Shriver, Jr., *The Gospel, the Church and Social Change.*

[4]Gnana Robinson, "Justice in the Old Testament," *Where is Justice?* Madurai: TTS, 1976, p 3.

and went in to her. When it was known that Tamar had conceived, Judah wanted her to be burnt. Then Tamar disclosed that it was through Judah that she had become pregnant. In that context Judah said: "She is more righteous than I." What Tamar did was ethically wrong but she fulfilled her obligation to her diseased husband by seeing that the name of the husband continued in this world through an offspring born to her through someone in his famiy. She took a great risk to fulfil the marriage commitment she made to her husband and thus her righteousness exceeded the righteousness of Judah.

4 *A Biased Justice*

The term 'justice' in a narrow and ordinary usage means rendering one's due to everyone, i.e., reward to the righteous and punishment to the wicked The biblical understanding of justice goes beyond this narrow meaning. The Bible speaks of a peculiar justice, a justice that is biased in favour of the underdogs. Justice expresses itself as a concern for the poor, as a compassionate going out of the powerful towards the weak. Jon Sobrino, the Latin American theologian, states: "By justice I mean the kind of love that seeks effectively to humanise, to give life in abundance to the poor and the oppressed majorities of the human race."[5] It is significant that the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 20.21-23:33) starts with the concern for the oppressed: the slaves, sojourners, widows, orphans and those suffering under the burden of debt. In several of Jesus' parables the idea of God's biased justice is brought out. The parables of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15) and the labourers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1-16) go to emphasise justice as a reflection of God's action and relationship with human beings. The safeguarding of the rights of the poor, the defenceless, the foreigners, and even thieves, becomes the criterion for the just order.

5 *'Better Justice' or 'Exceeding Righteousness'*

The biblical notion of justice does not seek to render each one his or her due; it is a justice that is opposed to merits and claims. The Book of the Convenant goes on to be concerned with the rights even of the thieves and enemies. The law of Israel is probably the only ancient law that protects the rights of

[5]Cf.Stella BALTAZAR, "Justice: Impetus of the New Social Order" in *Third World Theologies in Dialogue*, p 3

thieves and wrongdoers. The thief has a right not to be killed except in a self-defence. The law creates a city of refuge for murderers to find refuge. Value is placed on the life and rights of the enemy. Jesus also advocates this better justice or exceeding righteosousness when he says:

> You have heard that it was said, 'an eye for an eye', and 'a tooth for a tooth'. But I say to you, 'Do not resist one who is evil. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also'.

And adds,

> You have heard that it was said, 'you shall love your neigbour and hate your enemy' But I say to you, 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you'

II. Some Christian Symbols of Justice

1. God as the Just King

One of the prominent images for God in the Bible is that of a Just King whose primary task is to establish a just and righteous rule. The deliverance of Israelite slaves from the hands of Egyptian oppressors suggests that God takes the side of the oppressed against the oppressors:

> Then the Lord said, 'I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their task-masters, I know their sufferings and I have come down to deliver them out of the land of Egyptians (Ex 3 7-8)

Because God takes the side of the oppressed, God hears the cry of the poor (Ps 9.12), takes up the cause of the widows and orphans (Deut 10:8) and appears in court on behalf of the victim and against the oppressor (Mal 3.5). God says:

> You shall not afflict any widow or orphan It you do afflict them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless If ever you take your neighbour's garment in pledge, you shall restore it to him before the sun goes down, for that is his only covering, it is his mantle for his body, in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate (Ex 22.22-27)

Karl Barth adequately summarises this conception of God when he says: "God always takes his stand unconditionally and passionately on this side and on this side alone: against the lofty and on behalf of the lowly; against those who already enjoy right and privilege and on behalf of the those who are denied

and deprived of it."[6]

The Just King not only hears the cry of the poor. He is also present in their struggles for liberation. God summons them to be God's agents of liberation and promises and manifests his presence throughout the struggle. This points to God's presence in *all* human struggles for justice. Furthermore, as T.M. Philip observes, "God's presence is not only a comforting presence as is popularly understood but also an instigating presence for historical changes towards the realisation of greater justice and liberation."[7]

2 *Humanity is in God's Image*

The Bible affirms that God is the creator of all human beings and that all human beings are created in the image of God. It is significant that the Hebrew writers depart radically from the then prevailing notion which regarded only the king as God's image. Kingship is universalised, and the master — slave, king —subject relationship is done away with. The Image of God in the Bible does not refer to any self-existing substance but to a relationship; not *analogia entis* but *analogia relationis* (Barth). The God of the Bible is not *Deus Solitarius* (a Solitary God) but *Deus Triunus* (Triune God). God is a God in relationship and fellowship. The human existence is therefore an existence in love, an existence for love of the other, i.e., "to be human is to be in community understood as the structure of common sharing through which the dignity and freedom of each individual, the well-being and fellowship of all, and the participation of even the smallest and the weakest are guaranteed and maximised."[8]

After delivering Israel from the Egyptian bondage God establishes a covenant with Israel with a view to creating a community built on the principles of justice. This community has the functional value of being a sign and an instrument in the process of God's establishment of a just order on earth. The intention and the features of the community of faith are described in the Bible. The purpose of establishing the community is to ensure that "there will be no poor among you" (Deut 15:4).

The features of the community of faith are summarized for

[6] Karl BARTH, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. II, part I, p. 386.

[7] M. PHILIP "Liberation and Justice Motifs in Christianity" in *Religion and Soiety*, 27/2 (June 1980) in n.15.

[8] C. DURAISINGH "Resources for a Just Society.. ", (unpublished) p. 8.

us by John Stek:[9]

(a) Everyone's person and property are to be secure (Ex 21:21, 29-31; Lev 19:14, Deut 27:18).

(b) Everyone is to be secure against slander and false accusation (Ex 23:1-3).

(c) Everyone is to receive the fruit of his or her labour (Lev 19:13).

(d) Everyone is to have free access to the courts and must be given a fair trial (Deut 16.18; Ex 23.6)

(e) Everyone is to share in the fruit of the ground, even the landless (Lev 19:9f, Deut 24:19-21).

(f) Everyone is entitled to a weekly rest, even the humblest menial servant and the resident alien (Ex 23:12).

(g) Everyone's dignity and right to be God's free human being must be honoured and safeguarded (Ex 21:2, Deut 15·12-18).

(h) No woman is to be taken advantage of because of her subordinate status in society (Ex 22:16).

(i) Everyone's inheritance of land must be secure, even if he or she mortgages it, he/she must be able to redeem it back (Lev 25:24).

(j) No one shall be above the law, not even the king (Deut 17:18-20).

(k) Punishment for wrong doing shall not be excessive with the result that the culprit is dehumanized (Deut 25:1-3)

Duraisingh summarizes it thus "To be just within the context of this community of humans is to be loyal in fulfilling the demands of each other and making the relationship whole."

The institutions of the Sabbath and Jubilee Year express God's concern for "the brothers who fall on evil days" The Jubilee regulations (Lev 25) prescribe the following (a) the remission of all debts; (b) the complete liberation of slaves with adequate substance for a new beginning as free persons, (c) the return to each individual of the family's property and redistribution of capital and (d) leaving the land fallow [10]

3 *Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God*

Jesus Christ appears on the scene announcing the Kingdom of God. "For the Kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17).

[9] Ibid., p. 12.
[10] Ibid., p. 14.

Jesus' life and work clearly establish his decisive solidarity with the oppressed and marginalised. Some of Jesus' ancestors were non-Jews and through them Jesus inherited "impure" blood. He chose to live in Galilee, known as "the Galilee of the Gentiles" or the Palestinian *cheri*, living along with those who were considered impure; He assumes the role of a bondslave to identify himself with the serving people; Jesus was a true Nazarene because of his solidarity with the weak and his opposition to the powerful: in the birth narratives of Jesus, Luke brings out Jesus' solidarity with the weak symbolised by Mary, the shepherds, Anna and Simeon. Matthew brings out Jesus' opposition to the powerful symbolised in King Herod. Jesus' beatitudes in favour of the poor, those who mourn, the meek, the persecuted, etc., are matched with his woes against the rich, rulers and religious leaders.

Jesus' life is also characterised by a liberative praxis.[11] Compassion is a foremost characteristic of Jesus. He had compassion on the sick, the hungry, the bereaved, the harassed and helpless, and gave public expression of his compassion. For Jesus the situation of oppression is not normal or acceptable: it is abnormal and unacceptable. Jesus declared the *forgiveness of sins* which attracted the charge of blasphemy. Forgiveness is the most endangering action for any oppressive society, for if a society does not have an apparatus for forgiveness, then its members are forced to live for ever with the consequences of any violation. Through the announcement of forgiveness, Jesus demystified an enormous social control. Jesus' practice of *table fellowship* with sinners and publicans was a challenge to the legal arrangements given by the dominant culture and threatened the fundamental morality of society. Jesus' announcement of the *Kingdom of God* heralded the end of the present unjust kingdom. It is a criticism of the powers and agents of the present order. Though the Kingdom announced by Jesus is an inclusive Kingdom, there is a preferential option for the three groups of people who were considered the rejects of the present kingdom: the poor, the sick, the sinners.

4. *The Cross and the Resurrection*

The Cross of Jesus brings out the truth of the suffering God, and God's identification with human sufferings. The sufferings

[11] V. Devasahayam, *Outside the Camp*. Madras: Gurukul, 1992, pp. 29-31.

of humanity have a divine dimension. The poor are the proxies of Christ. For Christ says:

I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you clothed me,
I was sick and you visited me,
I was in prison and you came to visit me.
.....
Truly I say to you,
As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren,
You did it to me (Mt 25 35-36.40)

The Cross symbolises for us the pain and sufferings of humanity as well as the deepest agony of God and God's participation in our suffering.

The Cross cannot be separated from the resurrection of Jesus The resurrection of the crucified Lord is the basis of hope for the human struggles for justice. The resurrection of Jesus is God's vindication, a reassertion that the way of justice that Jesus took is the way of God Through Christ's resurrection, God promises and makes possible a future for the disinherited, the oppressed and the marginalised, with whom Christ identified and for whose liberation he gave himself up. The Cross symbolises the human wickedness that puts away the persons who are perceived as critics and as a threat to unjust structures. Jesus' resurrection was a powerful political act of God done in defiance of human institutions whose leaders found Jesus a challenge not to be tolerated any longer [12] The Church, the product of Jesus' resurrection, therefore rightly preaches Christ crucified and resurrected announcing the Christian imperative to fight against injustice.

The hope symbolized in Christ's resurrection is a subversive hope, the hope that refuses to accept the present unjust reality and hence envisages a future for the whole humanity.

5. Worship as Doing Justice

The two great commands of Jesus for those who accept his call are to love God and to love our fellow-humans. In fact, the two commands are inseparably linked and one is not possible without the other.

---

[12] [illegible], op.cit.

The prophets constantly remind the people of God that to love God is to do justice. Every worship of this just God must be an expression of justice. To love God is to establish a just relationship among human beings. The message of the prophets can be summarized as God's demand for interhuman justice, not cult:

I hate, I despise your feasts,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies ..
Take away from me the noise of your songs,
to the melody of your harps I will not listen.
But let justice roll down like waters
and righteousness like an ever flowing stream (Amos 5:21-24).

Prophet Isaiah announces Yahweh as speaking:

Is not what I require of you as a fast
to loose the fetters of injustice,
to unite the knots of the yoke
and set free those who have been crushed?
Is it not sharing your food with the hungry,
taking the homeless poor into your house,
clothing the naked when you meet them ? (Is 58:6-7)

Jesus, standing in the prophetic tradition, declares.

Woe to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites!
For you tithe mint and dill and cummin,
and have neglected the weightier matters of the law·
justice and mercy and faith —
these you ought to have done (Mt 23 23)

As God is a God of Justice, those who accept, love and worship this God are called to struggle for the establishment of social justice.

Let me conclude this paper with an observation of a judge who was asked to define justice: "People ask me what my concept of justice is. I tell them that I feel never so far from knowing what justice is as when I define it. I feel much closer to justice when I am searching for it."[13] As we are seeking clarity in our understanding of social justice, let us remember that we do not really know or understand social justice till we are involved with the oppressed in their struggles for social justice along with the God who struggles to establish *His* justice on earth. ☐

---

[13] *Ibid.*

VJTR 58 (1994) 420-428

The Jesuits, the Council and the Option for the Poor

Paul CASPERSZ, S.J.

As a preparation for the Synod on consecrated life we share with our readers a slightly revised version of a talk by Fr Caspersz (Satyodaya, 30 Pushpadana Mawatha, Kandy, Sri Lanka) to the Jesuits of his country in November 1993. The concrete referents (Jesuits and Sri Lanka) have been preserved, with the hope that the orientations proposed will be of relevance to the concerns of other religious and priests everywhere, or, for that matter, of any Christian concerned with the relationship of Justice to Faith in our time.

1. The Identity of the Contemporary Jesuit

The 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (GC 32) of 1974-5 received many requests for a decription of Jesuit identity in our time It responded with its Decree 2:

> What is it to be a Jesuit? It is to know that one is a sinner, yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was .

It then asks

> What is it to be companion of Jesus *today*? (emphasis mine)

and answers

> It is to engage, under the standard of the Cross, in the crucial struggle of our time the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes
>
> The Society of Jesus chooses participation in this struggle as the focus that identifies in our time what Jesuits are and do

It is therefore the integration of the struggle for faith with the struggle for justice in one single thrust that identifies, or should identify, the life and activity (or apostolate, to use the more ecclesiastical word), of a Jesuit in our time

2. Decree 4 and the former Summary Rule 11

The Decree 4 of GC 32 on the Jesuit mission in the world of today is now well known by every Jesuit:

> The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement.

Pedro Arrupe has sometimes been called the second founder of the Society of Jesus for the reason that he sought to make the Society relevant to the needs of our day and time, as Ignatius

sought to make it sensitive to the vastly different needs of Church and Society in his day and time. So it may be said that Decree 4 explains the spirit of the Society for today in the same way that Rule 11 of the Summary of the Jesuit Constitutions written by St Ignatius did for the pre-GC 32 period of its history.

Rule 11 (taken from the *General Examen*) states the identity of the Jesuit as follows (in words which many Jesuits of an earlier day knew by heart):

> (It is highly important to ponder) to how great a degree it helps and profits one in the spiritual life to abhor in its totality and not in part whatever the world loves and embraces, and to accept and desire with all possible energy whatever Christ our Lord has loved and embraced. Just as the men of the world who follow the world love and seek with such great diligence honours, fame, and esteem for a great name on earth, as the world teaches them, so those who are progressing in the spiritual life and truly following Christ our Lord love and intensely desire everything opposite. That is to say, they desire to clothe themselves with the same clothing and uniform of their Lord ... to such an extent that where there would be no offence to his Divine Majesty and no imputation of sin to the neighbour, they would wish to suffer injuries, false accusations and affronts, and to be held and esteemed as fools (but without their giving an occasion for this), because of their desire to resemble and imitate in some manner our Creator and Lord Jesus Christ, by putting on His clothing and uniform, since it was for our spiritual profit that He clothed Himself as He did

The question may here be asked as to why a second founding of the Society and a new Jesuit identity were needed at all. The basic answer is that all indications are that humankind around the end of the Second World War entered upon a new age or period in its history (or the new age had begun much earlier but its signs became incontrovertible at the end of the war). Some of these indications are the technological change, the revolution in the complexity and speed of mass communication media, the growth of the workers' proletariat movement, the influence of Marxism both as ideology and as a method of social analysis, the official social teaching of the Church since *Rerum Novarum*, liberation theology, the emergence of the Third World.

At the discussion which followed this presentation, it was agreed by all present that it was Rule 11 that paved the way for Decree 4 and that no contemporary Jesuit could live Decree 4 without the spirit of Rule 11.

This should, however, be in no way allowed to blunt the cutting edge of Decree 4. The spirit of Rule 11 is the personal following of Christ, while that of Decree 4 is the following of Christ not merely personal but corporate, and the following of Christ by struggling for justice for the people of his predilection, that is, the poor.

3. The "Promotion" or the "Struggle" for Justice?

We speak of the promotion of a new product in advertising campaigns, e.g., a Coca Cola Promotion drive. Justice, however, is not easily achieved. It may therefore be better to use the term *Struggle* for Justice

It is therefore the integration of the service of faith with the struggle for intra-national and inter-national justice that identifies, or should identify, the life and activity (or the apostolate) of Jesuits of our time.

4. The Integration of Faith and Justice

Some may experience genuine difficulty in understanding that faith inexorably and irresistibly includes justice, that you cannot have a deep and living faith without a passionate commitment to justice. Yet this is the basic insight which should characterize the Jesuit and the Jesuit apostolate of our time.

Fr T.K. John expresses the idea well:

> The biblical understanding of faith always included justice By justice one understands the ethico-moral rectitude and fullness that ever mark and envelop the human person in her/his relationship with others, with nature and above all with God To accept fully the human person, equal in every respect, irrespective of the economic, cultural or professional standing, and to be an equal partner with all of the benefits and resources of the land is also part of that justice [1]

And Fr Michael Jeyaraj.

> They (Dr Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi, Mahatma Phule, Sri Narayana Guru, Jayaparakash Narayan, Vinobha Bhave, E.V.R., Swami Agnivesh and Baba Amte) showed us through their lives that to believe is to collaborate with God in the transformation of the world around us and that without appropriate works of justice it is indeed sterile and spurious [2]

---

[1] *Formation in Mission. The Final Report of the Formation Review Commission and the Conclusions of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia.* December 1992, p. 124.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

To continue with T.K. John:

> The experience and interpretation of the Exodus, the Palestinian settlement after the Exodus, (*mine: add* the Exile and the return from the Exile,) the prophetism right up to the preaching of John the Baptist (including of course Second Isaiah, Amos, etc.), and above all the depiction of the life and ministry of Jesus ... these are among the key landmarks in the biblical tradition for the inclusive understanding of faith. The recurrent theme was Yahweh was with the poor. He took the side of the oppressed, the *anawim*, and it is through such a stand that the violators of justice were called to repentance and conversion.
>
> But in course of time this fuller dimension of justice-faith got impoverished. Faith was reduced to assent of the mind to the doctrinal presentations of the revelation and belief in that process.[3]

Those who did their theological studies in the pre-Vatican II period remember how faith was defined as *assensus intellectualis propter auctoritatem Dei revelantis* ("faith is an assent of the mind based on the authority of the revealing God"). If we take faith to be merely this intellectual assent to dogma, then, of course, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to see justice as included in faith. If, however, we take faith as commitment to the God of Justice, if we believe, despite so much personal and collective injustice, that the God of Justice cannot but give us the assurance that justice will triumph, then the entire panorama of faith changes. It changes from a dull intellectual assent to a passionate championing of the cause that God holds most dear — justice, inter-human justice, within nations and between nations.

We have sometimes to read the Gospels without the paraphernalia of scriptural exegesis, without the more or less unintelligible commentaries of scholars, and let them hit us fully in the face. After all, the Gospels, certainly the three synoptic Gospels of Mark, Luke and Matthew, were written to be read, or listened to, by people who laid no claim to formal theological training. Then we shall see how Jesus moves effortlessly from the ministry of nurturing faith to that of caring for the people who were in need

Let us list a few of these instances, taken from Luke's Gospel:

> Lk 4.18. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor"

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 124-5.

Lk 5:17: "One of these days he was teaching ... and the power of the Lord was present so that he healed people."

Lk 7:18-23/Mt 11·2-5· Jesus appeals to his works of compassion, to the fact that the Good News is proclaimed to the poor, in order that John the Baptist and his followers should recognize in him the Messiah.

Lk 5:22· "Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven', or to say, 'Arise and walk'?"

Lk 18 7-8 "Now will God not see justice done to his chosen who cry to Him day and night even when He delays to help them? I promise you He will see justice done to them, and done speedily But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?"

Among the evangelists, Luke is the one most impressed by Jesus' option for the poor, the sick, the oppressed. If we read his Gospel with pencil in hand, and underline the passages where Jesus manifests his partiality to the economically or socially poor, we shall probably have to mark every page, and some pages more than once and heavily.

5. The Option for the Poor

No Pope in history before or after John XXIII had the intuition so powerful as his that the Church, if it was to be the Church which Christ intended it to be, had to be the Church of the poor In his radio message to the world on September 11, 1962, exactly one month before Vatican II was due to begin, John said the momentous words which enshrined his hopes of what the Council would achieve

> I want to make another point of tremendous significance Facing the underdeveloped countries, the Church shows itself as it is, the indeed it wishes to be, as *the Church of all, but particularly of the poor* Any offence against the fifth and sixth commandments of God, any refusal to be bound by the obligations of the seventh commandment, social injustices which cry to the high heavens for vengeance — all this will have to be clearly stated and denounced It is the duty of everyone, therefore it is certainly the duty of every Christian, to estimate what is superfluous to oneself, going by the needs of others, and to see that the distribution of material goods is for the benefit of all This is what distribution means from a social and communitarian point of view, and it is an essential note of true Christianity This will have to be firmly emphasized [4]

Note how in John's mind the infringements of the seventh commandment are spotlighted more than those of the sixth,

[4] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 54 (1962), p 682, emphasis mine.

often in confession, auricular or other, taken to be the main field of immorality. Note also that social injustices and the private, selfish appropriation of the superfluous are considered to be violations of the seventh commandment, that is, to be acts of sheer and simple theft. Here, of course, may be detected a hark back to some of the ancient Fathers of the Church: St John Chrysostom, St Ambrose, St Basil the Cappodocian, even Clement of Alexandria, St Augustine.

The Council opened on 11 October 1962. By the last day of the first session, 6 December 1962, it was clear to Cardinal Lercaro of Bologna that "the point of tremendous significance" was not being made. Lercaro, who was a friend of John and shared with him an openness to the world and a commitment to the poor, spoke strongly and needs to be quoted here at some length:

Above all else, I would urge the necessity of formulating the doctrine of the Church What is needed is a doctrine of the Church that can go beyond and behind the juridical order which seems so largely to have inspired the drafts Let us seek to understand better, and together, the essential message which this Second Vatican Council must give to the people of our time

I want to say this the mystery of Christ in the Church has always been, has continued to be, and today more than ever is, the mystery of Christ in the poor, in so far as the Church, to quote our Holy Father John XXIII, is the Church of all but is particularly the "Church of the poor"

Hence, at the end of this first phase of the Council, it is our duty to recognize and solemnly proclaim the mystery of Christ in the poor and the evangelization of the poor to be the centre and motive force of the doctrinal and legislative work of this Council: this indeed is the evident, concrete, actual and urgent task of our times. For these are times in which, in comparison with times gone by, the evangelization of the poor seems to have gone by default; we have allowed the hearts of the poor to be alienated and estranged from the mystery of Christ present in the Church Yet ours is an age when people are asking serious and most dramatic questions concerning the mystery of poverty and are looking for answers What, they ask, is to be the fate of the poor, both poor individuals and poor nations, caught up in abject poverty, yet aware as never before of their rights? .

Far be it from me to add yet another subject to the already long index of Council themes. But this I do intend to urge: we shall not satisfy the truest and deepest longings of our time, among which is our hope for the unity of all Christians, indeed ours will be an exercise of escapism, if we approach the subject of the evangeliza-

tion of the poor as merely one among the several themes of the Council.

No, there is no question of yet another theme. It is simply *the* theme of the Council the theme of this Council is the Church, but the Church particularly as the Church of the poor .... By way of conclusion, let me give some examples — they are only examples — of the manner in which our proposals for renewal should proceed, with wisdom certainly and with prudence, but without fear and compromise

(a) The use of our material resources

(b) The outlines of a new style of living for our bishops (*mine add* religious superiors) lest we who are more often than not really poor in fact, appear to be rich

(c) Fidelity of religious institutes to poverty, not merely personal but communitarian

(d) A new economic order which would entail the giving up of certain institutions of the past which are no longer useful and indeed hinder our free and generous apostolic service

And so on Lecaro ended amidst applause, unusual in that august assembly But that was all The task of the theory of the Church of the poor and of its practical implications remains unfinished business in the Church to the present day, more than thirty years later [5]

Since Vatican II there has been much use in various documents of the Church of the phrase *Option for the Poor* GC 33 (which some feared would water down the thrust of Decree 4) said in its single document

> we wish to make our own the Church's preferential option for the poor This option is a decision to love the poor preferentially because there is a desire to heal the whole human family Such love, like Christ's own, excludes no one but neither does it excuse anyone from its demands Directly or indirectly this option should find some concrete expression in every Jesuit's life, in the orientation of our existing apostolic works, and in our choice of new ministries

The use of the term 'a preferential option', instead of, as is the choice of some sometimes, 'a radical option', or 'a fundamental option', or even just 'an option' seems in itself a minimalist position, which is always in danger of de-radicalizing the original force of the uncompromising option to be on the side of the poor (I opt for tea, but must confess that I prefer coffee! I opt to hold on to our schools for the rich, but I do have a preferential

[5] *Acta Concilii Vaticani II Periodus 1 Vol 1 Pars IV*, pp 327-330

option for the poor). An Option for the Poor is not safeguarded by an individual's own poor lifestyle, or by works of charity in favour of the poor. All this is secondary to the prime Option for the Poor.

6. The Option for the Poor and the Choice of Ministries

GC 33, as already quoted, has spoken of the all-pervasiveness of the Option for the Poor. First, it says that the Option excludes no one: I expect this means that the Option does not exclude working for the non-poor. Second, it says that the Option does not excuse anyone from its demands. This comes perilously close to running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. But it is a peril which GC 33 finally and fortunately avoids, for it goes on to say that the Option for the Poor "directly or indirectly" should mark every Jesuit's life

The Kathmandu Statement of October 1989 of the Major Superiors of the Jesuit South Asian Assistancy was entirely unequivocal about what it meant by the Option for the Poor:

> By the poor we mean all socio-economically marginalized groups, particularly the dalits, tribals, women, unorganized labour, illiterates [6]

It immediately proceeds to enuntiate with the utmost brevity and clarity the criterion to be adopted in work for the non-poor:

> Our work with other groups is justified to the extent that it contributes to this empowerment of the poor [7]

The Kathmandu Statement (at whose instance is not clear) was held to be utopian and ultra-radical. Hence the Final Report enuntiated what is basically the same criterion, but, with not-unusual Jesuit legerdemain, in terms less calculated than Kathmandu to disturb the cautious. It says that Decree 4 demands

> a commitment to justice in the wider perspective including the preservation of the integrity of creation always understanding that our work with groups other than the poor is justified to the extent that it contributes to the conversion of all to the demands of justice and the establishment of God's reign on earth. This mission is our response to the call of Jesus Christ addressed to us at this moment of history [8]

[6]The Formation Review Commission. Jesuit Conference of South Asia. *The Interim Report, 1991*, p 3

[7]*Ibid.*, p 4

[8]*Formation in Mission. The Final Report of the Formation Review Commission and the Conclusions of JCSA, 1992*, p XII, 4 15.

It is each Jesuit who works with the non-poor who therefore has the sacred duty to discern with appropriate consultation how the Option should influence his work. At all events, the Option should always be in our minds and hearts, like a working mother who never for a moment, even while attending to her work most faithfully, can forget her sick child at home.

Finally, each Jesuit and each Jesuit Province, each religious and priestly group, each Christian community, should seek to identify the chief areas of the struggle for "justice-grounded-in-faith." In Sri Lanka today these areas should include the following:

(i) inter-ethnic justice and the building of a Sri Lanka consciousness and identity that transcend or overarch, without in any way denying, particularist consciousnesses and identities;

(ii) the rights of workers and peasants and the poorer classes so badly affected by the Structural Adjustment Policies of the World Bank and the IMF;

(iii) the rights of women, who on the plantations of tea outnumber men in the workforce;

(iv) care for the environment,

(v) the search for a new society, discarding all wishful thinking that with the collapse of the "communist" states history has ended because the whole world has opted for the free enterprise, capitalist market model.

One last word If each and all of the more than 20,000 Jesuits, scattered all over the world, probably in all the most important capitals of the world, really and truly live and work the Option, what the Society achieved in the 16th century would-be dwarfed by what it will still achieve in the 21st ☐

VJTR 58 (1994) 429-434

The Church and Political Change in Africa

Commitment to more democracy and justice

Emmanuel RUKUNDO, S.J.

Fr Rukundo is one of a dozen Rwandan Jesuits left after the murder of three others in the very retreat house in Kagali where he had been ordained last summer From his theologate (Jesuitenkolleg, Sillgasse-6, A-6021 Innsbruck, Austria), he reflects on the recent massacre in his country and the general situation in Africa He sees the prevailing unrest as a result of divisions hardened during the colonial period and of the transition from privatised governments to participatory politics, and spells out the role the Church plays in the present process.

The murder of the eight native priests, nine nuns and two lay people in Rwanda (a small state in Central Africa) along with the hundreds of thousand victims of political violence has made the media aware of the terrible situation prevailing there. The tragedy continues and the unimaginable catastrophic situation of the people becomes worse and worse day by day. What takes place in the tiny Rwanda is a reflection of what actually happens in many parts of Africa Africa passes through a transition period from dictatorial regimes to democracy, from one-party rule to a sharing of power, from privatisation of governments to political, responsible participation of the people in the government. But most of the media reports on Africa do not speak of this aspect, but focus on the so-called tribal wars. That is due to the general pessimistic view about Africa and to the tendency to pick out only the negative aspects of African life

In many states (e g., Benin, Zambia) the democratisation process has been introduced without violence, and the restructuring of the politics has been guided with the participation of all social forces. The collapse of apartheid in South Africa and the recent comparatively peaceful election is an indication that a new political process has begun There is no doubt that Christians do play a significant role in this transformation. The figure of the Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu, for example, in the years-long fight against the apartheid, is of crucial significance. The

witness of Christians as credible and critical carriers of hope has been very powerful in the political and social restructuring of many African countries. Many Christians inspired by the message of Jesus commit themselves and their lives to justice, peace and reconciliation The recent murders are a witness (*martyria*) to this commitment.

Transformation of a Continent

The Synod of the African Bishops, which took place in Rome from 10th April till 8th May, has rightly interpreted the political crisis of Africa as a sign that the whole continent is at a crucial junction.

After the colonial period, in the 60's the people waited for the elimination of exploitation and suppression, and hoped for a new era of a just society The hope was based on the fact that the native people took political power in their hands. After years of fight against the colonial powers, it was assumed that the local politicians would represent the interests of the native population and a process of development would be introduced The expectation from the new ruling class was high

The euphoria of independence disappeared soon. Dictators, military groups and state political parties (one-party rule) have continued the colonisation and the exploitation of the people The political administration has excluded the majority of the people from political discussion and participation through manipulation, power struggles and clear deceptions Politics became the business of a lobby which controlled the economic, social and political power of these countries This leadership only increased the deprivation of the people both culturally and economically It also caused a greater external dependence of the countries At the same time, some courageous political leaders came into the scene, e g , Nyerere in Tanzania, Sankara in Burkinafaso, Buyoya in Burundi But they did not succeed in convincing other political leaders of the necessity of a political restructuring Moreover their ideal for a free and democratic society did not find an echo even in their own countries.

In the course of the last decades the corrupt African regimes created a great displeasure among the people and their totalitarian power became almost unbearable The opposition rose first among the students (e.g , in Nigeria, Zaire). Opposition parties, founded underground in the 70s, waged a constant war

with the totalitarian governments. They demanded a share of power and a cleansing of the political and economic administration, where corruption and arbitrariness were all-pervading.

The ruling parties on the other hand, do not let go of their power so easily. Unrest is often consciously created to have a pretence to eliminate the opponents. Even when the political opponents are not destabilised through this unrest, the lawlessness is an excuse for the governing parties to exercise arbitrary powers against the people. This way of sabotaging the process of democratisation corresponds to the political traditions of many governing parties, which have constantly instigated discord between the "tribes" as the basis for their power.

The escalation of violence in Rwanda and the bestial massacre of the dependents of the so-called "Tutsi-tribes"[1] and of the opposition parties is an example of what an authoritarian regime can do to reject the sharing of power. Two years ago in a national gathering of all social forces in Zaire a democratisation process was proposed But the ruling party of the president did not allow any of its suggestions to come into force. On the other hand, in Burundi, President Buyoya prepared for political reconciliation and paved the way for democratic elections. In the last few years the shaky equilibrium was disturbed by the power struggles and thousands of innocent citizens had to give up their lives

The transition to an open political society continues and it demands much effort and sacrifice The murder of the eight priests, one of whom was a co-founder of a human rights organisation, is an obvious case. In the struggle for a just society a new consciousness is awakened, which is a harbinger of the dawn of the new political mentality

Political Commitment of the Catholic Church in Central Africa

By Central African countries, I mean Burundi, Rwanda and

[1]Rwandans have the same language, same culture and same history The term "tribe" is an ideological expression which has unfortunately led to much political violence. The term "tribe" comes from the colonial ethnology, which was forced on the Rwandans to justify the prevailing social categories (Tutsi, Hutu, Twa) Suddenly the social relationship was changed into a racial or tribal relationship The politicians who profit from it perpetuated this "tribal" distinction. Rwanda is the only country in Africa where the name of the tribe is entered into one's identity papers since the time of the colonisers.

Zaire. I restrict myself to these countries because I know them better with regard to the commitment of the Catholic Church. Moreover the three countries form the Central African Jesuit Province, to which I belong.

The role of the Church is strengthened by the fact that the social and political crisis in Africa questions radically the message of the Gospel. The injustice, the unrest, the racism and the resulting hatred indicates that the Church has not succeeded in planting the message of the Gospel in the hearts of the people. In spite of an initial timidity and hesitation, the Church has now powerfully and courageously involved itself in the political interactions of the country.

Actually one should speak of the contribution of the Christian Churches But allow me to restrict myself to the contribution of the Catholic Church, which is most evident in the democratic process This Church continues to be the source of much hope because of its message of love and peace and its social power and prestige In the political discussions of the last few years the Catholic Church has played a decisive role in three special areas an objective analysis of the situation, an active participation in the discussions, and in proposing concrete suggestions to overcome the crisis

The first contribution is, without doubt, a clear and bold analysis of the political crisis [2] In the recent years, the Catholic Bishops of Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi have brought to light in their various documents the weakness of the political system in their countries. The documents of the Bishops of Zaire are the most significant [3] These bishops have dared to denounce the unfortunate political and economic situation of their land In their pastoral letters, they have clearly questioned the privileged political group and have shown how far the politicians are responsible for plundering the state exchequer, for corruption, for political murders and for ethnic conflicts. In Rwanda,

---

[2] For more information on the involvement of the Church in these political discussions, see among others. M CHEZA, H. DERROITE et R LUNEAU, *Les évêques d'Afrique parlent: 1962-1992 Documents pour le Synode africain*. Paris· Éd du Centurion, 1992. SERVICE PROTESTANT DE MISSION ET DE RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES. *Afrique en crise Paroles d'Eglises. Un dossier du DEFAP*, 102, Boulevard d'Argo, 754014, Paris, 1991

[3] Just one example. "Exhortation des Evêques du Zaire: Le chrétien et le développement de la nation," le 17 septembre 1988, in *Documentation catholique*, 15 october 1990

on the other hand, the bishops have done comparatively little to point out the reasons for the social and political crisis. In their pastoral letter they have mentioned the polarisation of the country through ethnic divisions and regionalism as the source of the crisis, without actually naming those responsible for it. Only after the beginning of the civil war (October 1990) was the problem of the hundreds of thousands of homeless Rwandans mentioned. In Burundi, the Bishop of Bururi was persecuted for years because he had the courage and the credibility to expose the social injustice there. Actually, however, the Christian lay organisations (groups of lay people and religious) have done more for the democratisation process than the Bishops.

The commitment of the Catholic Church also shows itself in its concrete participation in the debates for the necessary reforms. The bishops had to undertake, so to say, the political responsibility to facilitate the dialogue for reform, and could do so because they did not have any political ambitions. As it happened in many other African countries (Togo, Benin, Kongo), in Zaire too Bishop Mwosengo led the "National Conference"[4] at the request of the people. He played a very significant role, and continues to do so, in the realization of the transitional institutions. Through his competence and capacity to compromise, he has shown how much the Church has to offer to lead the countries out of their political confusion. The Bishops in Rwanda and Burundi also function in various reform commissions.[5]

The concrete suggestions which can be derived from the documents of the Bishops demand sincere and democratic debates and the introduction of an ethic of responsibility and transparency in the political realm. In a special way the contribution of the Catholic Church to the question of unity and peace is significant. Of course there is much more to be done even within the Church itself. The Church proceeds on the primary assumption that we are all children of God, and goes on to show how the plurality of societies is not a hindrance to living together but a chance and an opportunity to build up a just society. So Kossi Tossou rightly pleads that the Church should take up a decisive

---

[4]"National Conferences" are gatherings consisting of all social forces and are responsible through debates and decisions for the transition to democratic societies.

[5]E.g., Bishop Kaburungu Stanislas played a significant role in 1989 in a commission responsible for the unification of the country.

role in showing the richness of the plurality of ethnic groups.[6]

Certainly it has concrete significance and can start healing processes when the Church in these countries speaks out against the violation of social and political laws and confronts the corruption of the political class. But what is most convincing is the action within the Church itself. For example, as regards the exercise of power and ethnic mentality, much has to be done so that the witness of faith is effectively and credibly accepted. The crisis in Africa challenges the Christians and poses the question: What do we do with the Gospel? Is the message of Jesus a source of faith and hope? Does it strengthen us for our commitment to life, to the dignity and freedom of the African people? We have begun to answer these questions concretely, even with our lives. We are aware that much is left undone.

---

[6] Cf. Kossi Tossou, "Herausforderung der Kirche" in *Zur Debatte, Themen der katholischen Akademie in Bayern*, January-February 1994, pp 6-7

Contd from page 472

local response to the global problems. Issues like militarism, forgotten at Riocentro, were taken up here. This meeting produced concrete commitments rather than documents.

In place of the traditional anthropocentric theology and other-worldly salvation to the neglect of this world and nature, the churches need to develop an all-embracing cosmos-centered theology and spirituality. In this respect, the book could have discussed the culture, world view and spirituality of the indigenous peoples whose lives are interwoven with nature and its cycles. The churches have a lot to learn form these peoples and their cultures for an appropriate ecological vision.

Though the author does mention the Global Forum, he has failed to see the significance of a collaboration of the WCC with such groups. The Global Forum is an alternative attempt of committed NGO groups to the official Earth Summit. The churches need to strengthen, mutually encourage and collaborate with the various attempts of these voluntary groups. Neither the WCC nor the author in this book seem to have taken the Global Forum seriously.

S.M. John KENNEDY, S.J.

VJTR 58 (1994) [illegible]

The Synod on Consecrated Life and the Ashram Tradition

Reflections in the light of an alternative experience

Sara GRANT, r.s.c.j.

After a long experience in Ashram life (Christ Prema Seva Ashram, Shivajinagar, Pune 411005) the author reflects on the theme of the coming Synod on consecrated life. She first describes the general characteristics of ashrams and then reflects on how they contribute to the renewal of religious life in the Church: a charismatic simplicity of life, a less juridical understanding of the 'vows', a great role given to spiritual leadership with flexibility in its functioning, a sense of the relation of the 'consecrated' life to the baptismal and 'creational' consecration, the radical nature of the search of God and the centrality of experience, and, not least, the dialogical spirit that the open ashram tends to foster

I. Preliminary

The eighth meeting of the (Catholic) Ashram Aikiya held at Anjali Ashram, Mysore, in November 1993 focussed its attention on two main themes, "Christian Ashrams and Hindutva" and "The Role of Christian Ashrams in the Church and Society." On the last day a brief statement was drawn up which was sent to all Bishops and Major Superiors. It read in parts as follows:

> The role of ashrams in the Church was seen in the perspective of the forthcoming Synod of Bishops on the Consecrated Life in the Church and in the World. The unanimous testimony of all those who spoke of their vocation to this way of life, however varied their situations and the obstacles they had to face, made it impossible to doubt that there was here a powerful movement of the Spirit creating a 'new thing' in the Church which could have a revivifying effect on religious congregations. The fear is sometimes expressed that ashram life is incompatible with the charism of one or other congregation, but the radical living of the Gospel in terms of the Indian situation is at the heart of every religious vocation, and any community which lives this vocation fully will inevitably approximate more and more to the ashram life-style, which is in essentials flexible enough to be compatible with almost any form of ministry engaged in by religious in India today.
>
> .... It was felt that India had in the ashram tradition a valuable

contribution to make to the Synod's reflection on the charismatic nature of the consecrated life and its immense powers of adaptation to the needs of the contemporary world, in India and beyond. It was resolved that the Aikiya should bring this to the attention of the Indian delegates to the Synod and supply them with necessary data through the Secretary for the CBCI Commission for Religious.[1]

The present article is offered as a small contribution to this calling of attention.

1. The origin and variety of ashrams

It is not necessary to reproduce here in detail the tradition regarding the origin of ashrams in Vedic times, though it is worth noting that they developed almost accidentally into places where boys of the three upper castes were prepared to take their place as responsible members of society. Even though the men who imparted this training had themselves retired from active life and were engaged in preparing for their own final awakening, there was apparently no sense of incongruity about combining this preoccupation with the education of youth: the identification of ashrams with an alienating acosmic aloofness from "ordinary" life came only later, with the dimming of the realization that the awareness of rootedness in the Eternal — however minimal it may be — is precisely what makes a human being fully human

The immense diversity of ashrams is not always realized by Christians, who tend to have a stereotype of orange-clad figures perpetually sitting in silent meditation or chanting Sanskrit slokas, but is of considerable relevance in the present context. They range from strictly contemplative communities where the stress is on meditation, study of scriptures and chanting, in an otherwise silent atmosphere, through *bhakti* ashrams which cater to the spontaneous piety of ordinary people by fostering devotion to the "Nameless and Formless" as a personal God with the help of some specific "name and form," to the *karma-* or *sevā* ashrams which offer some practical service to humanity, ranging from providing shelter and food on the great pilgrim routes to acting, like the Gandhian ashrams, as power-houses for social transformation Members of *sevā* ashrams see their life's work as "service of God through service of people." Most ashrams have something of all three aspects, but the emphasis differs.

[1]For the full text see *Word and Worship*, October-November 1993, pp 325-6.

Ashrams have proliferated down the centuries, and it is impossible to hazard a guess as to their present number: there are dead ashrams and living ashrams, ashrams that are neither dead nor alive, and terminally sick ashrams; there are flourishing ashrams that draw thousands of pilgrims every year, often in family groups, and provide them with inspiration and energy to carry on the daily struggle for existence. There are also new ashrams, some large and ostentatious, ignoring it would seem the crucial norm of simplicity, and still others small and hidden. Among these latter are a number of recent Christian initiatives hardly known as yet beyond their immediate surroundings.

2. Christian ashrams

Though ashrams have existed in India for almost three thousand years, there were no Christian ashrams until the present century: Christian forms of consecrated life were imported by early missionaries and maintained almost intact to the present day. The reasons for this, and its consequences, are worth pondering as a help to overcoming our own possible prejudices.[2]

The first Christian ashrams, apart from one or two abortive Catholic attempts, were begun in the 1920s by Protestants and Anglicans. These early Christian ashrams drew inspiration from Gandhiji as well as from the Gospel, and were associated with the Independence Movement and the movement for a more Indian Church, less dependent on foreign leadership and resources. The Christa Prema Seva Ashram, in Pune, founded in 1927 by the Anglican Father Jack Winslow, still remains inspired by his profound conviction that the Gospel can and should be lived in terms of *any* culture· he was deeply concerned over the socio-cultural alienation suffered by Hindus who became Christians in that part of India — and this long before Vatican II.

The first Catholic ashram was Shantivanam in Tamilnadu, founded by Father J. Monchanin and Father H. Le Saux (later Abhishiktananda) O.S.B., in 1948. Its stress was also on "inculturation" of the Gospel and of Benedictine life, with special attention to the liturgy and the development of a truly Indian theology.

---

[2]The potential contribution of religious communities profoundly influenced by the ashram way of life to the inculturation of the Church in India can hardly be exaggerated.

3. The essentials of ashram life

The essentials of ashram life remain fairly constant throughout all this diversification, and are in general sufficiently well known, viz.:

— a group of disciples (sometimes only one) living with a man or woman regarded as being deeply rooted in God, *brahmanistha*, or, in the old Christian phrase, "having not only learnt about, but experienced, the depths of God," and being therefore capable of awakening others to the same experience, according to their capacity and the gift of the Spirit;

— a radically simple life-style, reflecting the single-mindedness of the spiritual quest; this would normally include the study of scripture and the lives and teaching of holy men and women;

— regular physical work, including at least the household tasks necessary for daily living;

— the welcoming of all who come seeking spiritual help, and even physical help within the ashram's resources and policy. (Nowadays it is often most helpful to put people in touch with Government or other agencies adapted to needs we cannot and should not attempt to meet.)

These are the basics. The spelling out of them in practice is not uniform, but in principle they do not change: for example, there may no longer be a living human guru, either because he or she has died but their spirit lives on in the group so that it has not been thought necessary to name a successor, as at the Sri Ramanashramam in Tiruvannamalai, or because, as in the Brahma Vidya Mandir Ashram at Paunar, there has never been a human guru, only a human facilitator for the *Antaryāmin* or Spirit of God indwelling the community. Again, the spirituality and general atmosphere of the ashram will vary according to the orientation given by the guru and the path he or she follows — *jñāna*, *bhakti* or *karma*. This will also affect the kind of service offered by the community to their fellow men and women.

4. Ashrams and liberation

Ashrams have from the beginning been associated with the *liberation* of human beings. In Vedic times they looked to *moksha*, or the ultimate liberation from the human condition on earth; the Gandhian ashrams and the first Christian ashrams were concerned with freedom from foreign rule and the effects of colonialism — though this was not their primary objective, it flowed

as a natural consequence from the Gospel and Gandhiji's vision of a truly free humanity; in modern times there has been a growing emphasis on freedom from cultural domination, and today in both Hindu and Christian ashrams there is a growing sense of responsibility for helping in the evolution of a more just society.

An indication of an increasing recognition at the international level that ashrams have something to contribute in this field was a Conference and Workshop organized last October by the Lutheran Evangelische Akademie at Loccum in Germany, on "Liberation Theology and Encounter of Religions." I was invited to speak on ashrams, and gave a paper on "Awareness of Rootedness in the Eternal: A Potential Contribution of the Ashram Tradition to Liberation Theology." Some of the participants told me after wards that without the ashram contribution, "a whole dimension would have been missing" from the Conference.

5. Ashrams and religious life

From what has been said so far, it will be clear that "ashram" life is not synonymous with "religious" life, though they have much in common, above all their common calling to witness to the "Now" of eternity present in the fleeting "now" of time. In fact, all the recognized forms of Christian consecrated life — orders and congregations, secular institutes and societies of apostolic life — could probably recognize their counterparts, or some approximation to a counterpart, in the wide variety of incarnations of the ashram ideal, and possible future forms too, as yet unimagined: for example, some ashrams have men as well as women in the same community, which in spite of the "double monasteries" of earlier Christian history is not envisaged in the present Code of Canon Law. However, religious congregations interested in the ashram tradition of consecrated life should not be deterred from exploring further by an erroneous assumption that they have to take all or nothing of what they see in Hindu ashrams. The essentials must be there if a community is to assume the title of "ashram," but the way of living them out will always be matter for discernment and the exercise of the same freedom in the Spirit with which our own founders and foundresses and our ancestors in the ashram tradition blazed a trail for us.

II. Ashrams and the Synod

One of the greatest contributions the ashram tradition could offer to the Synod is undoubtedly the accumulation of almost three millennia of practical experience of "consecrated" living. It seems reasonable to think that this experience might throw light on some of the questions asked today about possible developments in religious life, the answers to which at present remain largely theoretical. This was brought home to me by the editorial of the September-October 1993 issue of the *Review for Religious* in which David Fleming, S.J., asks:

> How can we make present to ourselves and for our times the richness of the Spirit's gift of consecrated life — to us religious and to the Church? We may need to face the question, for example, whether charisms, even corporate ones, can be timebound. Might whole religious groups, because their charism is incarnated, have a temporary lifetime? Should we spell out poverty, chastity and obedience as vows essential to religious life when as vows they have not specifically marked the consecration of a number of religious groups? We might ponder whether *evangelical counsels* in their non-specificity say more about what marks religious life. Since both lay persons and clergy share in religious life, is the levelling quality of that life in the Church vital for internal religious-life administration? Any number of questions can and should be raised *and seen in the light of tradition and new theological understanding* (emphasis mine)

1. The charismatic nature of consecrated life

The *Lineamenta* for the Synod refer several times to the charismatic character of religious life, and a good deal has been written in response about the need to resist the tendency to over-institutionalise that life and reduce it to an extension or subsidiary task-force of the hierarchical Church. It could plausibly be argued that institutionalisation has already gone too far, in spite of the greater freedom given to religious congregations in the revised Code of Canon Law. Coordination of hierarchical authority and charismatic freedom there certainly must be, yet one cannot help feeling that there is at present an excessively vast and complex body of legislation: in matters of the Spirit the appropriate mode of government would seem to be discernment rather than legislation, though a minimum of the latter will also be necessary.[3] The experience of the ashram tradition

[3] If only to protect individuals and groups against the abuse of power, spiritual or temporal.

by and large could encourage a holy boldness here, a greater flexibility and openness to risk and to the natural rhythm of life and death, of rebirth *through* death, which is the law of the whole cosmos and of the Paschal Mystery itself ("unless the grain of wheat..."). Perhaps we should ask whether the passion for legislation does not sometimes reflect a desire for security and permanence, a fear of dissolution and death, which all too easily becomes a refusal of life. Religious congregations not infrequently give the impression of seeing themselves as having been founded for eternity on earth: the succession of superiors must be secured, vocations "recruited," departures regulated, every possible contingency foreseen.

Ashrams, on the contrary, have come and gone down the ages. If the original teacher or guru dies, there may be a successor or there may not. (Obviously ashrams which have grown into large institutions have the same problems as Christian communities with apostolic work: here as elsewhere, "small" is not only "beautiful," but expedient — and for other reasons too). It would seem therefore that charisms may be time-bound without disaster. If ashram communities can die out or dissolve, their surviving members going to some other community or a hermit life, why not Christian communities?[4] Has a preoccupation with providing material security *usque ad mortem* (and even beyond — our burial plots must also be assured!) stifled or crippled the original willingness to take the radical risk of leaving all and following the homeless Lord who had nowhere to lay his head, free as the birds of the air? Do Christian religious have to be made more secure than their secular brothers and sisters?

2. The three vows

David Fleming's suggestion that "we might ponder whether *evangelical counsels in their non-specificity* say more about what marks religious life" seems to find support in the long-standing Benedictine tradition of two vows, of obedience and "*conversio morum*," usually and pleasantly, if obscurely, translated "conversion of manners," but really meaning exactly what Fleming has in mind — the adoption of the Gospels as a handbook for daily living. This might well be considered in the light of Gandhiji's

[4]This has already happened in some cases in the West, but is usually seen more as a matter of regrettable expediency than as recognition of the "time-boundness" of a charism.

eleven vrats or guidelines for ashram living, and Vinoba Bhave's reply when he was asked by members of the six ashrams he had founded whether it would not be good for them to have vows "like Christian missionaries." He said: "If you put a horse into a field with a fence round it, he stays there because he cannot get out. If there is no fence, he stays because he wants to!" Although this clearly does not do justice to the Christian understanding of vows as the expression of a permanent self-commitment springing from the heart — or for that matter, to the Hindu understanding of *brahmacarya* or *sannyasa* — Vinobaji's point remains valid in so far as communal codification of obligations under formal headings can lead to progressive deadening of the sharp challenge of each opportunity for personal choice: we adopt a certain common framework or standard of living according to the basic obligations of the vows, and within those limits feel safe and carefree, like the horse in the fenced field: we are after all "good religious"! This question seems to have an added urgency today when greater freedom in the choice of ministry, the use of money and interpersonal relationships can lead to a somewhat casual attitude to the challenge implied in the vows, which we nevertheless accept as at least nominally defining our status in the Church and the world.

If these seem to be subversive, Devil's Advocate thoughts, let us listen again to David Fleming.

> The three-volume Council Daybook of Vatican II shows that the 1960s' Church included widely varying theologies of the consecrated life. Where religious life fits within the Church, God's people, was not a quickly or easily resolved question for the Bishops as they formulated the Council documents. Nor were there easily agreed-upon understandings of the evangelical counsels as the elements of the life called "religious" through the ages. Since few bishops who were in the debates and discussions leading to the Vatican decrees remain active, there is no easy way to make use of these debates and discussions in efforts to *move beyond the limitations and compromises of the then new Vatican II thinking*[5] (emphasis mine)

In other words, if the Synod is to make any real contribution to the renewal of consecrated life in the Church, it will need to begin by acknowledging that even Vatican II did not say the last word, and look with contemporary eyes at the nature and role, *actual and potential*, of the "consecrated" life, and

[5] David Fleming, *loc.cit.*, p 645

in particular of the "religious" life, in the Church and the world today.

3. Return to the roots

At the origin of both ashram life and the myriad forms of religious and "consecrated" life that have flowered in the Church down the ages lies the overpowering and "one-pointed" desire which drove men and women into the forest or the desert or, in the case of the consecrated virgins, set them apart at the heart of the local Church, as striking witnesses to that "other dimension" of human existence which was always present to the consciousness of Jesus ("I came forth from the Father, now I leave the world and return to the Father ... the Father is with me... I do always what pleases the Father...").[6] Even today in both traditions this radical "seeking of God" is officially seen as the ultimate justification for the consecrated life, though its "witness" value is stressed much more in Christianity together with the ancillary benefits of service of fellow-human beings after the example of Christ, which today is quite often accepted as sufficient motivation for entering religious life without, it would seem, sufficient explicit reference to the eschatological aspect of that life.[7]

Until perhaps the seventeenth or early eighteenth century, service in Christian monasteries flowed more or less spontaneously from the "seeking of God" without causing too much tension or obscuring the ultimate goal: the forms of service were determined, then as now, by needs in the actual life-situation, but the demands were not, in general, excessively taxing. However, with the rapid evolution and industrialization of civil society and the consequent involvement of religious communities in forms of service which drew them out of their monasteries and convents into the streets and villages, a tension began to be felt

---

[6]One of the ways that might help to widen the horizons of the *Lineamenta* might be to remember that Jesus was not a Christian, but a Man for all men, the archetypal Man ... This needs to be made very clear today or we do him grave wrong.

[7]Cf. Sandra SCHNEIDERS, IHM, "Consecrated Celibacy as Charism," in *The Way, Supplement*, 1993/77, pp 13 ff She says that in her experience many celibates do not really *choose* celibacy, but accept it as the condition for something else — e.g., membership in a community with a particular apostolate. She also stresses the close connection between consecrated celibacy and contemplative prayer, and its essential character of eschatological sign.

between the contemplative and active dimensions of life, which became more and more acute. I have written elsewhere[8] of the unnatural dichotomy between "contemplative" and "active" religious life based on the erroneous identification of contemplative prayer with a life-style withdrawn from human society, a disastrous misunderstanding whose roots go far back in theological history, and which the Vatican Council sought to correct, notably in the great chapter 5 of the Constitution on the Church on "the universal call to holiness," but also in the firm statement in their document on religious life[9] that there is no such thing as purely *active* religious life: it must always be both active and contemplative. However, the legacy of that misunderstanding is still with us, in spite of the widespread rediscovery of more contemplative paths of prayer in recent years, and in different ways its influence obscures the essential meaning of the "consecrated" life in both contemplative and apostolic communities

In fact, there seems to be a serious theological ambiguity underlying the whole classification of forms of "consecrated life" into contemplative and apostolic religious orders and congregations, secular institutes and apostolic societies. It would perhaps be better to drop the phrase "consecrated life" in favour of "*evangelical*" or even " fully human"[10] life which can and indeed must be lived out in an immense variety of modalities and yet is always a following of the poor, chaste and obedient Christ in the spirit of the beatitudes, even if this is not fully adverted to[11]

The Council itself recognises this when it says that religious are supposed to "give outstanding and striking testimony that the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes But it belongs to the laity by reason of their special vocation to seek the Kingdom of God by engag-

[8] Cf Sara GRANT, rscj, "The Universal Call to Contemplation in the Tradition of the Church," in *Lord of the Dance and Other Papers*, Bangalore ATC, 1987, pp 5-23

[9] PC no 5

[10] Not at the merely humanist level, but in the sense of the famous statement of St Irenaeus. "The glory of God is *man fully alive*, but *life for man is the vision of God*" The second part of the statement seems to be much less well-known than the first.

[11] Because the way he went is the way all humans must go to attain the End, which is why he himself had to go by it to be recognized as archetypal Man or Satpurusa.

ing in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will."[12] They too, however, "must diffuse in the world the spirit which animates those poor, meek and peace-makers whom the Lord in the Gospel calls blessed."[13]

4. "Universal consecration"?

The root of the problem seems to be that whereas religious are technically regarded as set apart and "consecrated" by their vows, which are seen as simply making more explicit their baptismal commitment, this position has been somewhat undermined by the recognition that *all* the baptized are "consecrated" or called to holiness by their baptism. Karl Rahner goes even further and speaks of consecration as potentially inherent in human nature itself by reason of the essential capacity for self-transcendence implicit in the ordination to God as the ultimate end of existence.[14]

The question therefore arises, Is their a difference of kind, or merely of degree, between "religious" and "lay" consecra-

[12]*LG*, no 31.

[13]*LG*, no 38.

[14]"Is (baptism) purely and simply the first and fundamental establishment of a person's 'consecratedness', of his admission into the dimension of the holy God and his love, in which God by 'consecrating' man imparts to the latter his own holy life? Or is baptism, at least normally, and as such necessarily, the manifestation (but an effective manifestation) of an internal consecratedness of man by grace, ontologically, existentially and chronologically prior to baptism. a consecratedness which always and from the outset fundamentally determines man's existence, *so that he simply cannot escape from this ultimate sacral sphere of his existence*, even though he has either not reacted at all in freedom to this definitive state, or exists freely in opposition to this existential established by grace? .... We claim, then, that the fundamental effects of baptism (that is, the most fundamental consecratedness of man and man's existential always and everywhere) are present even *before* sacramental consecration, that baptismal consecration therefore comes after and is based on the consecratedness of man which is derived from grace, that *this consecratedness as ontological and existential is the ground and not originally the consequence* of baptismal consecration (this is *not* to deny the efficacy of baptism as sacrament on this fundamental consecratedness of man, though it makes its efficacy more difficult to elucidate) " Rahner adds that not all the effects of baptism are present before the reception of the sacrament.. The basis of this thinking is the freely-offered self-communication of God from *within* creation, freely offered to man's freedom. "World and man become holy in an existential sense through man's freedom in accepting God, *since they are always also sanctified prior to this by God as origin, dynamism and goal precisely of this history*" Karl Rahner, S.J., "Consecration in the Life and Reflection of the Church," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. XIX. New York: Crossroads, 1987, p. 57 ff. (Emphasis mine throughout).

tion? Does this question even make sense today? Does the concept of "consecrated life" as it is used in the *Lineamenta* clarify anything, or merely add to the prevailing confusion?

It is highly pertinent here to consider what is actually happening to apostolic communities today: in many cases their members are becoming indistinguishable in life-style and ministries from members of secular institutes and lay associations, and numbers are diminishing to such an extend that many congregations in the West are faced with the not too distant prospect of extinction. These trends are so widespread that it seems not unreasonable to see here not a regrettable falling-away from traditional standards, but rather a prompting by the Spirit to explore new paths more in harmony with the socio-cultural evolution of our times. There is a tremendous need today for the yeast of the Gospel to permeate the whole of human society with the spirit of the beatitudes, if the "universal call to holiness" is to mean anything at all. This will call for great freedom both to adapt existing structures of community life and ministry and create new ones without too much preoccupation with exact classification and the preservation of forms which have served well in the past, but outlived their usefulness. (The question of "time-bound charisms" is clearly relevant here.[15])

At the same time the opening onto eternity of every human life, and the double dimension of the Kingdom "already present yet still to come," can never be lost. The Church at present appears extremely weak on eschatology: the old ways of presenting death, judgment, hell and heaven, not to mention purgatory, do not figure much in preaching or serious spiritual writing nowadays, and no satisfactory alternatives seem to have been found. The enclosed contemplative orders are supposed to be the "eschatological sign" par excellence, but can we honestly say that they are a compelling and illuminating witness, a lighthouse, as it were, to the vast majority of Christians, let alone the

[15]A specific question which should probably be asked is whether apostolic congregations may not gradually die out as a separate species as their life-style and ministries approximate more and more to those of secular institutes and apostolic societies, while people with the charism of consecrated celibacy and the depth of prayer implicit in it tend to form "open" communities somewhat on ashram lines, offering hospitality and spiritual help and support to so many who are at present, in the words of the psalmist, "suffering hunger like dogs and wandering about the city" in search of it. This will obviously be a slow process initiated by the Spirit, if it does happen: no legislation can or should enforce it, but it might be good to envisage the possibility

human race as a whole, including the thousands of young and not-so-young people roaming the earth consciously in search of the ultimate meaning and purpose of life? It is true that they are attracting more vocations in some countries than the apostolic congregations, but not so many that it is irrelevant to raise here also the question of time-bound charisms ...

It is perhaps here most of all that ashrams, both Hindu and Christian, in spite of their incidental shortcomings, have something to offer to Christian religious orders and congregations.[16] By and large, most ashrams still present to all comers a stark challenge by the unmistakable visibility of their one-pointed thrust to God, or the Eternal, however named, expressed in the radical simplicity of their life-style no less than in the steady rhythm of their silent meditation, chanting and disciplined work. All human beings are not called to the same degree of material simplicity of life, but something of the spirit of the first beatitude must touch every Christian individual and community as a reminder and expression of that "consecration" or ordination to the Holy which gives ultimate meaning to every human existence. The strictly contemplative communities in the Church may indeed retain a basic simplicity of life, but their strict enclosure hides this from ordinary people, and often creates a certain sense of alienation. Perhaps they have something to learn from the "open door" policy of the ashram tradition, for which interiority deeply rooted in the heart has no need of walls and grills to protect it, and is not diminished by being made accessible to the thirsty who come to the waters. It is in fact frequently communicated without words.

But it is not only the contemplative orders that are concerned here: we may lawfully ask what the whole Church and the world at large can hope to gain if the members of the Synod can widen their vision of the "consecrated life" to include the age-long experience of the ashram tradition. One of the most common criticisms of the *Lineamenta* has been precisely the narrowness of their vision of consecration, circumscribed by ecclesiastical considerations, with only the most casual reference in passing to the presence of "experiences of 'monastic' life dedi-

[16] In this paper I have been primarily concerned with the positive aspect and insights of the ashram tradition. There have been, and still are, abuses and mistakes, no doubt, but the same is true of religious life in the Church. We could probably both learn quite a lot from each other's deviations — on condition that we first learn each other's insights.

cated to asceticism and contemplation"[17] in other religions, and the possibility of dialogue with followers of these religions. This indicates little awareness of wider horizons awaiting exploration. The Synod would seem to offer an unprecedented and most timely opportunity to take up and squarely face the fundamental question of the ultimate purpose and meaning of human existence, its eschatological dimension which alone gives meaning to the concept of "consecration" taking this term in its widest sense as a fundamental dimension of *every* human life. The Synod would then be addressing itself to the whole human race, with a far better chance of being seen as relevant and listened to: it would be touching on the most basic issues preoccupying men and women today — not only the question of ultimate meaning or purpose which torments so many, which could be met to some extent by a healthily-agnostic but absolutely firm eschatology on the lines of Paul's "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man...," but also incidentally, as corollaries, the disturbing modern dilemmas related to human birth and death. Seen in this perspective, the various forms of evangelical or "fully human" life would fall into place as part of the same integral project of being human on the earth, and not simply as something that goes on within the boundaries of the Church, governed by a forest of complex rules and regulations. Hindu ashrams know nothing of baptism, but they know a great deal about the essential human potential for consecration implicit in every human conception. It would be good if the Synod could adopt the same perspective, and also recognize explicitly the presence and action of the Spirit in the various forms of dedicated or "consecrated" life in other religious and spiritual traditions.

Conclusion

I have concentrated in this paper on three main points — the universality of consecration and its charismatic and eschatological dimensions. By way of conclusion I would like to highlight briefly some other insights from the ashram tradition which could have practical implications for the Synod:

1. The importance of *a radically simple and uncluttered life-style* as both support and immediately intelligible expression of the primacy of the eschatological dimension of "consecrated" life.

[17] *Lineamenta*, no 43

ii. **Recognition of the highly relevant, and indeed crucial, role of *holy men* and *women* in society, and the priority of holiness and discernment over merely administrative gifts in the leadership of religious communities. Administration is important, and should be efficient. It too should be guided by the Spirit, and those immediately responsible for it should be accountable to the spiritual head of the community, recognizing their own role as subsidiary, not absolute.**

iii. *The absence of fixed terms of office* for spiritual heads: they may resign, but are normally in office for life. In the light of this it may be useful to review the experience of frequent automatic changes of leadership in religious communities in recent years, especially in terms of the spiritual maturing of communities and the availability or otherwise of holy and wise persons.

iv. The *constant attention to the teaching of the Guru*. How many religious communities have direct recourse to the Gospel as practical handbook for daily decisions? Our rules and constitutions are surely meant to help us in this process, not to replace the Gospel. In many ashrams the teaching of the Guru is an almost tangible presence.

v The call to ashram living is a call to a profound *anubhava* or *experience* of "the depths of God," though its modality varies according to temperament In Hindu, as in Christian, tradition the actualizing of this call is seen as pure gift, to be *prepared for in faith* by a seriously disciplined life and *an immense desire* — Sankara says, "to the exclusion of all else." This would seem to have an important bearing both on the rather high incidence of apparent unhappiness and non-fulfilment in religious life, and on the appointment of masters and mistresses of novices and other spiritual guides it is firmly held that those who have not themselves attained this living experience cannot help others to it

vi Again, in Hindu tradition, no one is "sent" to an ashram unless the inner drawing is there the call to discipleship must come from within. This raises serious questions about the mass "recruitment" of candidates for religious life still practised by some congregations, usually with the aim of providing staff for institutions: should there not rather be far more lay people staffing these, and far fewer members of religious communities, living much more radical but visibly happy lives than at present?

vii. Finally, there is the remarkable contribution of ashrams to a

better understanding between men and women of different faiths and even no specific faith. Experience shows that the atmosphere of most ashrams is profoundly conducive to such meetings of the heart, and to the rediscovery of their roots by those who have given up on their religion, and in particular given up on the Church. Yet with few exceptions, which include the monasteries which belong to the Benedictine-sponsored association for "Monastic Inter-religious Dialogue," religious communities within the Church have not yet realized the immensely important role they could play in fostering that peaceful mutual understanding between different faiths which is, as Hans Kung has noted, a precondition of peace between (and we may add within) nations.

This was in fact one of the main points made at the Ashram Aikiya meeting which sparked off this paper and it has urgent relevance today far beyond the boundaries of India:

> It was stressed that Christian ashrams cannot identify themselves with any one tradition in a way that would compromise their response to the teaching of Jesus, which calls them to stand with the 'broken' members of society who form the vast majority in the country, and with people of other faiths and communities Christian ashrams should be *places of deep prayer and reconciliation*, open to all men and women who share a common desire to go beyond all labels and live by the values present in all religious and spiritual traditions, and aspired to by every human being [16]

The profound and sympathetic entering into the depth-dimension of other faiths, where they spring forth from and return to the eternal Mystery "beyond all name and form," is surely an appropriate ministry for men and women whose essential vocation is to witness to the ultimate meaning of every human existence ❑

[16] *Word and Worship*, October-November 1993, p 325

VJTR 58 (1994) 451-461

The Family and the Mystery of God's Love in Christ

Dr Joseph A D'SOUZA

The following address was given to the Plenary Assembly of the CBCI in New Delhi, February 1994, by the Secretary for the Family of the CBCI Commission for Laity and Family VJTR 54(1990) 521-5 published an article by Dr Joseph and Arlette D'Souza on "Vocation and Sexuality in Marriage and in the Priesthood " They reside at 1-B Catholic Colony, Santacruz 'V, Bombay 400054

I. Introduction

It is my delight and privilege to speak to you, dear Fathers of the Church in India, on the theme of the family, during this year providentially chosen by the apex body of the human community as the International Year of the Family. Especially to you who have participated in the Vatican Council and in various subsequent life-giving Synods, in particular the 1980 Synod which resulted in the epochal Exhortation on the Family in the Modern World

The UN of course has its own agenda for stimulating the human community through international action for family welfare This action is intended to be permanent and self-propagating, so that society is continually regenerated through the well-being of its smallest and most vital unit This action plan must be subscribed to by all sections of society, including the members of the Christian communities

But this agenda does not touch the source of family integrity and its consequent social health and justice. This source is the stable and life-enhancing relationship between the parents themselves and in consequence, between parents and children. It assumes — perhaps inevitably — that there will always be "single parent families," obviously the result of cohabitation and separation or divorce The children of such families need even more effectively a personal integration into a stable social existence. The consequences of such early exposure of the child to human neglect and criminality need no elaboration.

What is even more basic is that there is in the UN agenda no recognition or acceptance of the Creator's own design of the

happiness in the family and society — as Our Lord Jesus put it, "from the beginning" — and which our Pope has been at pains to re-emphasize continually. Instead, it is stressed that all forms of family structure are equally viable, and that one should avoid promoting a single ideal image (e.g., the conjugal form) of the family. This is distressing: the ideal of a monogamous, life-long union of spouses, faithful unto the end, as the privileged means of nurturing new life in God's own image and likeness, is as far from the UN ideal as it is in the rest of today's secular, technological, materialist and consumerist society.

II. The Ecclesial Task

We have to ask ourselves, therefore, whether the objectives of the Family Year can at all be achieved in the absence of this fundamental criterion of human existence. And further, whether or not the Family Year points to a radical need and providential opportunity for a Christian presence and witness in contemporary society This is not to decry or denigrate the valuable diagnoses and timely initiatives of the UN, but rather to promote and direct it by an evangelical action at the very heart of the family

We have been reminded by the Pontifical Council for the Family that our role in the Church is one of service to the whole of humanity by helping it to discover ever more deeply the truth about the person and the family The divine vocation to be family exists for all humankind even if the call to be a Sacrament of Christ exists only for those who recognise Him It is in the very act of discovering and asserting the truth of this call among Christian families that we are empowered to proclaim it to all the world

What then is this Gospel that the Christian family as the first community is called upon to announce to the young child, what is its primary catechesis, and finally which plan of formation can be offered to the Christian family so as to enable the Church itself, a family of Christian families, to be a light to the world? In the effort to unravel the entire truth and the full dignity of marriage and the family, we are called upon, as the Pope says, to make a discernment as Church, constituted by *pastors and faithful* This discernment therefore is also the responsibility the Christian spouses and parents who are qualified for this role by their charism or specific gift, the gift of the

sacrament of matrimony.

I shall speak of our ecclesial task in this Year of the Family, and the years to come, under three aspects, that of *Theology*, of *Catechesis* and of *Praxis*. It is not necessary to say anything startlingly new. All that we need is enshrined in our holy Scripture and magisterial tradition. What is really necessary is to remove the mental conditioning of a monastic formation of almost two millennia so as to live out fully the truth already known but perhaps not appreciated in its entirety.

III. A Theology for the Family

If the family is to be appreciated in its Christian perspective, the first truth is a renewed understanding of God. This means not merely to profess but to *believe* in a trinitarian God, that is, in a God of relationship — a God who reveals Himself to people in family situations, as father, as spouse, as child; and finally who reveals himself as Love. It is such a God that is at the heart of family and society, and the world is poorer for His absence from it.

A God, who, having created Man in his own image, male and female, and delighted in them, described their vocation to marriage in terms of setting at nought all other priorities, to cleave to each other and become one flesh And who, on their failing to do so, and all humanity following their example, promised and in the fullness of time sent his own Son to become one flesh with us, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, born of the immaculate virgin, to show us how we should become one flesh with each other.

A wonderful Son who emptied himself, taking on the form of a slave, born in a stable, assuming our utter poverty and homelessness. Who was hungry, thirsty, grieved, craving our sympathy, like unto us in all things but sin. Who thereby could have compassion on our infirmity, and loving us to the end, was obedient to death on a cross. Who by his obedience, cancelling the disobedience of all humanity, showed us how to be obedient to each other in loving service, husbands and wives, parents and children, the forerunner and microcosm of all human social relationship.

A Son who, at the request of his virginal Mother, revealed his glory as his Father's only-begotten, by turning the water of human love, with all its inadequacy and impermanence, into

the superabundance and richness of his own divine love. Anticipating thereby the hour that he himself longed for, when at the nuptial feast of his cross, he would turn wine into his own blood for his bride, the Church Also showing how, what was impossible for us was possible for God, if Christian couples would but believe in him, invite Him into their marriage and, doing as he has told us, love each other unto death.

And finally a Son who driven by the Spirit of Love, always did the things which pleased his Father, lived by every word that fell from his Father's mouth, whose food and drink it was to do his Father's will, to accomplish his plan. Who gifted us with that same Spirit, so that we ourselves may be one, as he and his Father are one, and said, "therefore you are no longer two, but one flesh." What great trinitarian love at the heart of the family, in the bosom of society! This is the very proof that Jesus is indeed the Saviour of the world, sent by the Father to bestow permanently on us the gift of the Spirit. But do we cultivate, become intimate with, and implore and adore this Comforter, Counsellor, Guide and Most Faithful Friend? If the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is not a lived reality in the family, uniting husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, how can his presence be effective in the Church and in the world?

IV. A Family Oriented Catechesis

We come now to the catechetical aspect of a renewed family orientation in the Church, an orientation which demands a discernment from the whole Church of pastors and faithful, and should be a joint lived experience if it is to bring forth fruit in keeping with the new heart required of us in the Family Year and beyond We are all a product of family life, our mission is to families, both at the heart of the Church and in the world. We abandon our roots only to the detriment of this mission so crucial for this acceptable time, this *kairos* of God's plan

In their pastoral approach to the Christian faithful, our dear and holy priests have internalised well, according to the glorious tradition of the Church, the fatherly aspect of God's love for his people What is not yet understood fully is the spousal aspect of Christ's love for his Church, a feature of Christ's wonderful heart emphasised by St John the Baptist, by Our Lord Jesus himself and later so eloquently by St Paul. It is a feature of

Christ's manly consecrated celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom, by which he related so superbly to the men and women of his time, and received in return a response so exquisitely profound yet so sharply differentiated, in its manly and womanly generosity, that it leaves us transfixed with wonder.

In this respect we are on delicate but holy ground, and we must tread carefully, but full of confidence in the Holy Spirit, whom we can trust to give us the mind of Christ in an area so necessary for the formation of our young priests-to-be. And not only for them but for the benefit of the entire Church and the world. For it is only through a fresh understanding of chaste celibate and spousal love in God's plan, that the glorious complementarity of the sacraments of priesthood and marriage will be revealed in the building up of Christ's body. It will also give us a profound understanding of human sexuality, so exalted above the animal sexuality presently in vogue in the modern world

When we come to family catechesis, we find that same glorious but uphill task of evangelisation that has engaged us till now Here especially we are confronted with the powers and principalities that are at work today, as they were from the beginning of time, trying to undermine God's perfect plan. For God's wonderful plan is the same regarding the unity of couples and families as it is regarding communities and nations. And this plan is subject to attack and derision from the one who wishes to prevent it at all cost, and one whom Jesus called a liar and a murderer from the beginning.

This catechesis for the family could be conceived of in three stages, the first two referring to relationships in the families endowed with the vocation to marriage — and so applicable to all humanity — and the third referring to families in which marriage is lived as a sacrament of Christ. As will be evident, this divine pedagogy at the heart of the family is such that even those who have never known Christ intimately would be drawn to him, lifted up as they would be at the source of life, within the intimacy of family relationships.

The first step in the divine vocation is to see each other in the family as the living image of God. This fundamental experience is authenticated at peak moments of family life, such as when the parents behold for the first time their infant child, or when the young spouses-to-be meet each other in the sacred

setting of their life-time vow of consecration to each other. Such a life-giving vision granted at privileged moments is enshrined in the sacred writer's assertion, "In God's own image he created him; male and female he created them." And also in Jesus' affirmation of the little child whose angel always beholds the face of his Father in heaven.

If we in the family are made in the image of God who is love, it is evident that our core experience of God is met in fulfilling our basic need of loving and being loved in the home. If this experience is vitiated to the extent that we would rather in desperation call each other 'image of Satan' (to use the colourful vernacular expression), then the entire catechetical process takes on a new urgency and a particular poignancy How can the image of a God who is relationship be regenerated in the family, so as to be reflected in our own social and inter-communal relationship? Why has it faded away, and how can it be restored?

It is at just such moment of illuminating vision, when Adam had exclaimed of his young wife Eve, "This at last is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone," that the God of relationship introduced the second step in the divine pedagogy, again a lesson available to all humanity. "Cleave to each other and become one flesh." This teaching is guaranteed to preserve, enhance and restore the divine image in us It is a lesson capable likewise of renewing and strengthening all relationships, interpersonal, inter-communal, international.

For in essence it means to make the words, the thoughts, the desires, the dreams, the needs of the other, equally our own. To enter into the other's joys and sorrows, as Jesus did ours, to feel in my flesh, what is exalting or hurting yours. Through constant, open and loving communication. However, to do so is not easy. Are we willing to look behind a complaint, a sarcastic remark, even an outburst, to discover the hurting, lonely or misunderstood person? Or shall we, after some sincere or half-hearted attempts, give up and say to ourselves substantially, "This at last, has become a thorn in my flesh"?

The situation is their no doubt serious and can result in anger, cruelty, and emotional if not physical murder, which is exactly what the father of lies had intended from the beginning — for couples, families, communities and nations. This is the end of the road, as far as human means are concerned. At this

point, the agonising question is asked, "Is there no way out?" And the answer is, Yes, and had been given from the beginning of creation: "The seed of the woman shall crush the head of the serpent."

This is exactly what the world is longing to hear and we have the means to tell it, through our families, in the International Year of the Family. Through the resurrection of the family, at the heart of society. To the extent that divorce can be eliminated, faithful love in families promoted, the solution to this world's ills has begun: the Kingdom of God is at hand. But it has to begin with the long-marginalised couple. Can we see the writing on the wall?

It is at this point that the third stage of the divine pedagogy begins, for families, communities and nations. In the words of St Paul, "No man ever hates his own flesh," and we think St Paul is stating the obvious, until it dawns upon us that he is not talking about us as individuals He is referring to the one whom Adam called, "flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone." He is talking about relationships in the family, husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister — ultimately, all humanity which Christ has espoused as his own.

And Paul continues, "but nourishes it and cherishes it, as Christ nourishes the Church." Here is where the challenge lies: can we partake of the Lord's body and blood, on a daily basis, and refuse on a daily basis to nourish our spouse, our child, in the family — and ultimately God's family on earth — with our own flesh and blood? Dying, if necessary, to give new life? It is not a Church regulation that makes Christian marriage indissoluble It is the very nature of the sacrament, which is intended to be the external sign of *Christ's Love* at the heart of society, *faithful, unconditional, irrevocable, eternal, loving to the end.*

And Christ has further proposed that through Christian witness this ideal be accepted by the entire human community, for whom this was so "from the beginning." Saying, "therefore what God has joined together, let no one put asunder." It appears that the call to evangelise the world through the family is in God's divine plan at the basis of the International Year of the Family. It is providential precisely because the family is seen to be basis of hope in a world of chaos, and it touches all humanity 'where the shoe pinches'. Is love real, is God real, can we find love at the very source of life?

As mentioned earlier, this is a long and uphill task, it will test our faith and our resources to their limits. It will be a response to the call of our Pope to re-evangelise the Church and his call for a New Evangelisation of the world in terms that impinge on daily life, the lives of all the world's families. And it is a gigantic task. It cannot be left to specialised groups, with their limited fields of operation, though these groups will be a valuable part of a great pool of resources. It has to be the task of the entire Church.

V. Action for the Family

This is what has emerged from two nation-wide consultations, one at Varanasi in December 1992 of the Regional Affiliates of this Commission and the second in Bombay, in October 1993, where the feedback of the suggestions made from all the dioceses for the Family Year were discussed. The details of this life-giving plan for Family Evangelisation and Renewal bear careful study and implementation, but are based on simple principles into which we feel we have been led as a national Church by the guidance of the Spirit of God The parish is the privileged place where the Church exists as an evangelising force, because this is where the Christian families mingle and interact with families of other faiths.

Action for the family which consists of Family Catechesis, Programmes for Family Enrichment, and Preventive and Restorative Action for Family Welfare, will proceed selectively at three levels The parish as people of God, the basic ecclesial community as the locally incarnated church, and the family as the domestic church. As the family becomes aware of its own inner dynamism and conscious of its solidarity with all human families in God's loving plan, as it begins to be relieved of its basic wants and inadequacies by a caring community, it will itself reach out in loving influence and support to those not so blessed.

In this way almost without conscious intention, the Kingdom of God will begin to be implanted, and the Church will exercise her primordial mission of being the seed of the Kingdom. But all this is guided by the Parish Family Cell which acts according to the needs, aspirations and culture of the families with which it is in intimate contact. Without the Parish Family Cell, which is composed of the grass-roots families and their

pastors united in a common endeavour, the movement will lack identity, be just a carbon copy of an imported system, and wither away.

A vital link in the structured action for a national family renewal programme is the Diocesan Family Commission, which animates and guides all the diocesan parishes towards a phased implementation of the programme. This Commission is instrumental in the formation and motivation of the individual Parish Family Cells, and oversees the progress of the renewal programme through the feed-back obtained from the Family Cells of all Parishes. Where dioceses lack Family Commissions it is imperative that such Commission be instituted during this time of the Family Year.

In concluding this section of Action for the Family, I would like to focus on the prevention of two great evils, contraception and abortion, which steadily erode and finally vitiate the gift of abundant life that the family was designed to be in human society by our Creator God. The reason why a contraceptive mentality — which naturally issues into a condonation and even defence of abortion — gains ground even in so-called Christian circles, is the lack of consensus on the basic question of human sexuality.

The reason for the endless and inconclusive debate is that the premises of the argument on each side are irreconcilable. Our Pope has stated in his superb encyclical on the Splendor of Truth that natural law, though divinely imprinted in the human heart, ultimately needs to be illumined by divine revelation as a means for recognising its truths, given the present state of fallen nature. The need therefore is not for argument, but for patient and persistent, humble and hopeful evangelisation.

There is no way to understand human sexuality except in terms of God's reign, God's presence in the human heart. This is what differentiates human from animal sexuality, making it benevolent, a gift of self — and a gift always demands effort and self-sacrifice. Just as a family meal is always a gift, a continent and shared experience prepared in love, and ultimately eucharistic, so also is human sexuality also continent and eucharistic. This is my body, said Jesus, given for you; this my life, poured out for you, so that you may have life through me.

Just as priest and faithful meet and celebrate the Eucharist, so also are priesthood and matrimony at one in the service of

the bride of Christ, which is our spouse. He is always seeking to wash her feet, always anxious for her abundant life, and the life of her precious child. We are one in a joint endeavour to trace the roots of human sexuality which is after all the sexuality of Christ himself, made like unto us in all things, except sin.

In this way, the watching of our natural signs and symptoms, the distinguishing of our fertile and infertile phases (for we are one flesh), the ordination of our sexual expression of love (always sexual in Christ's image) to her wifehood and motherhood, the alternation of courtship and marital love, the wooing and the winning, the bridal ambience of continent love in marriage, are matters of fascination and delight, and keep our relationship ever fresh, ever bridal, without wrinkle or stain or any such thing And the last wine is always the best wine.

Continent (not abstinent) human sexuality is unitive and life-giving, not divisive and death-dealing as the animal-like sexuality in the world It is pro-life and pro-conceptive, there is no hint of 'contra' here Natural fertility regulation is not the Church's way of contraception, any more than is a decree of nullity the Church's alternative to divorce One can see how in the popular conception these two radical opposites are seen as two faces of the same coin, and pursued as such This would be like a cancer in the body of Christ

Actually, the only hope of the world and a fortiori of the Church is Jesus himself, who as our Pope said in his inaugural address, knows the human heart He alone knows it. We can confide the hearts of our couples to Christ in this Family Year and be confident that he will illumine them If only we will do our part of catechesis, and preventive and restorative action.

When husbands come to revere the natural and beautiful lives of their wives, then both spouses will jointly and naturally revere the life of the child begotten in their love When contraception is excluded, abortion becomes unthinkable and as remote as the planet Uranus. But this will be the fruit only of patient, consistent and hopeful action, especially in the counselling and follow-up of our couples It is nowhere clearer just how massive is the scale of mobilisation and action needed for this purpose, and the gearing up of the whole Church to this catechetical effort

And yet this is only one of the fields of action. It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit guide and inspire us to sow the

seeds of a concerted action on all fronts as outlined in the proposals for the International Year of the Family, so that in His time, there may be a surprising sprouting and awakening, a deep renewal of the hearts of couples and families in the Church and the world, that may usher in a restoration of the whole of human society into a sacrament of God's Kingdom on earth.

Note

"Mysterium Liberationis"

The period immediately following Vatican II saw the apparition of a work of systematic theology under the title *Mysterium Salutis* (see CM 31 [1967] 268-71 For reviews of subsequent volumes see CM 32 [1968] 187, 37 [1973] 275, 38 [1974] 416 and 39 [1975] 180). The idea behind that work was a rewriting of a *Summa Theologiae* from the perspective of salvation history which had gained a great theological importance in the years before and after the Council. The work was edited by J Feiner and M Löhrer and in the original German edition consisted of five volumes in seven (two double volumes) I do not think the work is translated into English, although there is a Spanish edition (1969-1984) and I think at least a partial French edition.

Twenty-five years later Ellacuria and Sobrino brought out a more modest two-volume work in Spanish with the title *Mysterium Liberationis*.[1] Although the work did not have the completeness of a systematic *Summa*, yet it was an attempt to give the chief outlines of a new orientation to theology that took roots in Latin America and in other continents after Vatican II The Presentation of the two-volume Spanish work is written on behalf of both chief editors only by Jon Sobrino in March 1990 four months earlier Ellacuria had been martyred together with five other Jesuits and two women co-workers. As Sobrino says, the martyrdom of these and so many others in Latin America is both the *Sitz im Leben* and the *Sitz im Tode* for a true hermeneutic of Liberation Theology

Forty-one theologians from Latin America and Spain have collaborated in this work Each section or chapter contains a number of essays on the area from various perspectives, but no attempt is made to synthesize the various views The first section covers the history, method and specific contribution of liberation theology. The second section contains six chapters covering the following areas 1 Revelation in history (the role of the poor, history, utopia, the Kingdom...); 2

[1] *Mysterium Liberationis. Conceptos fundamentales de la Teología de la Liberación*. (Ed. by) Ignacio Ellacuria and Jon Sobrino. 2 vols., pp. 642 and 659 Madrid. Editorial Trotta, 1990. N.p ISBN 84-87699-00-6

The liberating design of God (Trinity, Christology with an added section on Mariology, the Holy Spirit); 3. Liberation of creation (Creation, Anthropology, Grace, Sin, Sexuality), 4. The Church of the poor as sacrament of liberation (Ecclesiology from the perspective of the poor, including Sacramentology, Priesthood and Ministry, Popular Religion, Sects, Inculturation); 5. The spirituality of liberation (Death, Martyrdom, Hope, Resurrection, and religious life), and 6 The Praxis of Liberation (Justice, Ideology, Revolution, Justice and Peace)

We are fortunate that most of this work has been translated into English and published by Orbis three years after the Spanish edition[2] The English version contains thirty-five essays and omits twelve from the Spanish edition The essays omitted are. Libertad y liberación y mundo material, Sexualidad, Sacerdocio, episcopado, papado, Ministerios laicales, Religión popular, Inculturación, Sectas; Vida Religiosa; and the three essays of chapter 6, Justicia, Ideología y Revolución, Violencia y Paz.

Besides the original "Presentation" the English edition has a new Preface also written by Sobrino where he presents an *apologia pro teologia liberationis*, in reality an *apology for the poor* He responds to those who think that liberation theology has already seen its day for three reasons: because it is repetitious and fails to meet more modern problems like ecology, feminism, indigenous peoples; because it has been impotent to prevent the rise of the sects in Latin America itself; and because the collapse of international socialism has deprived this theology of its economic and political horizons Sobrino replies that the question of the poor remains as central to the modern world today as twenty years ago, and that other problems must be perceived from this perspective, and that in fact no other theology places the poor at the centre of its concern as liberation theology does Further, the rise of the sects has been stronger where no liberation theology has taken roots or where the ecclesiastical policy has not encouraged the formation of basic communities And finally liberation theology is not based on historical socialism but on the experience of the God of the poor. He ends by quoting bishop Pedro Casaldáliga "Today the option for the poor is more timely than ever There are two reasons there are more of them, both in Latin America and in all the Third World, and they are ever-poorer" (xix)

The volume(s) do(es) not intend to give us a complete material for a course of theology from a liberation perspective. For this one may have to wait for the completion of the *Theology and Liberation Series* (Orbis, also coming as *Liberation and Theology Series* published by Burns and Oates) I believe that about 50 volumes are meant to cover the

[2] Mysterium Liberationis. Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology. Edited by Ignacio ELLACURIA, S.J and Jon SOBRINO, S.J., Pp. 752. Maryknoll: Orbis Books/Collins Dove, 1993 $ 44.95 ISBN 1-86371-313-1

whole of theology from a liberation perspective. So far I have seen only about ten volumes in English. I may have missed some others. A teacher at the undergraduate level could largely rely on the material offered by the *Mysterium Salutis* for his or her course, if she or he opted for that perspective. *Mysterium Liberationis* does not offer a comprehensive overview of the theological history of each treatise. The teacher will need to supplement much from other sources. But *Mysterium liberationis* will surely liberate and enable him or her to focus the presentation of the theological content in the perspective of the poor and their centrality in God's action in our world. She or he will be able then to build up a course where theology meets the experience of the poor in history and the revelation of the God of the Bible, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Goa To Me. By Teotonio R. de Souza. New Delhi Concept Publishing Co, 1994. Pp. 176 Rs 250. ISBN 81-7022-504-3.

This is a collection of articles by the Founder-Director of the Xavier Centre of Historical Research and a renowned historian. As an Introduction (13-31) to the collection, the author writes an autobiographical sketch which gives a reader a sense of the personality and attitudes of Teotonio de Souza as well as basic facts of his academic career.

The essays to a large extent react to the traditional history of Goa or give a story of Goa different from the "Golden Goa" approach. De Souza is interested in the relations of Church and State, the tensions related to caste and class and the importance of the economic, social and cultural dimensions of the history of Goa. He spans the period of history from the 16th Century to post liberation Goa and does not avoid controversy (are the Ranes Rajputs?), yet is honest and basically respectful of other historians and institutions.

One aspect which I appreciated was the concern throughout for the lives of the ordinary Goan village people, Goan diocesan clergy when missionary religious dominated the ecclesiastical life, Goan culture and values endangered and destroyed by the colonial power, the Hindu religion and related culture condemned by the religious imperialism of the Church ...

The longest essay describes and studies Goan village life. The sources available to be able to write histories of the "voiceless" are described with some examples of content. The conflicts in the Church, the negative aspects of Christianization, and rebel movements within the Church from the 18th century, are duly recorded and described. Two articles deal with Goa and the opium trade and China. The article on the Xenddi Tax — tax on Hindus who wear a chundi — reveals ugly aspects of ecclesiastical and colonial rule.

An interesting, though brief, article which is relevant in view of John Paul's planned journey to Sri Lanka for the Beatification of Fr Joseph Vaz deals with the origin of the Oratorians of Goa.

Readers interested in Goa, colonial rule, missionary attitudes and the history of the Church in Goa will welcome these insightful, bold and well documented essays.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

VJTR 58 (1994) 464-467

Listen to the Spirit

Social Solidarity

Sunday of Social Justice

The Sunday following the Indian Independence Day has been declared by the CBCI the Day of Social Justice. The date is significant: political independence is only the beginning of true freedom On August 15th, 1947, the Indian nation took the responsibility for its life and future into its own hands The Constituent Assembly which was called to create the frame in which the life of the nation should develop was deeply conscious of its responsibility not only to create the legal structure by which the Government and Administration of the vast subcontinent would be carried out, but also to give an orientation, a guiding vision to the nation in which all people, individuals and groups, would find their rightful place The vision is contained in the Preamble of the Constitution

> **We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign socialist, secular and democratic republic and to secure to all citizens**
>
> **Justice, social, economic and political;**
> **Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;**
> **Equality of status and of opportunity;**
>
> **and to promote among them all**
>
> **Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;**
>
> **in our Constituent Assembly this 26th day of November 1949 do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution.**

Thus national independence must become national freedom in a community where each person can live his/her life in dignity, as member of a society which guarantees each one equal basic rights and opportunities The yearly celebration of the Day of Independence remains an empty formality unless it includes the serious search into the national life — into the personal life of each one — as to what extent this vision has been fulfilled, where we still have to work and to struggle for change For this reason the day of Social Justice is fittingly placed on the Sunday after Independence Day

The Preamble of the Constitution contains a social vision of the people of India which must be read against the background of India's social history The early religious tradition perceived the basic unity of the people. Various functions were carried out by different groups of people, serving the one social body, united in a divine order. But

increasingly the interests and privileges of the various groups were set above the common needs, discrimination prevailed, submission developed into a status of inferiority. Distinctions were sealed with the rigour of discriminating laws, deeply embedded in the conscience of the people In modern society caste differences and rivalries have been politically utilized and become weapons in power struggles

Thus the social vision of the Preamble of the Constitution is a courageous challenge, a commitment to shake off inherited prejudices and discriminations, to embark on a process in which the ancient Indian awareness of oneness and divine order of human society would be realized in terms of the modern world, with the ideals of freedom, equality and brotherhood The legal fulfilment of this goal remains the responsibility of the Government, the formation of mind and heart of the people needed for an effective transformation, however, becomes the responsibility of the entire nation, of all who are able and ready to take part in social renewal

Here is the mission of the Christian community, small in number but in a big way involved in the work of education and in contributing to the mentality of the people The Church has a responsibility for earthly life Pope John XXIII told the bishops at the beginning of the Council that "life has to be ordered in such a way as to fulfil our duties as citizens of earth and heaven " We therefore "dedicate ourselves with earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands" (W M Abbot, *The Documents of Vatican II*, p 714) Pope Paul VI has spelled out this task forcefully in view of the Third World. In the Mission Encyclical written after the Bishops' Synod on Evangelisation, he recalls the anxiety of the bishops, especially from the Third World, "who spoke with an accent resonant with the voice of millions of sons and daughters of the Church " He points at the suffering of the "people engaged with all their energy in the effort and struggle to overcome everything that condemns them to remain on the margin of life· famine, chronic disease, illiteracy, poverty . The Church has the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings of assisting the birth of this liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete This is not foreign to Evangelization" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 30)

How has the Church in India responded to these appeals? Social concern and involvement have been a consistent theme in official declarations of the CBCI. The concluding "Statement of the National Consultation on Mission" (January 1994, in Pune) sums up the persistent recognition of the social commitment as a vital expression of Christian life: "Christian proclamation necessarily involves a preferential option for the poor and downtrodden " It repeats various statements of the Bishops' Conference and leads up to the statement of Paul VI. "It is impossible in Evangelization to ignore ... the importance of justice, liberation, development and peace in the world" (n. 57) However, we

have to listen to the Spirit and seriously examine the real actual attitudes, and the steps which have been taken, and ought to be taken.

Speaking about the Church and Dalits, the same document calls to memory the conversion movements among Dalits in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the great efforts that have been made to improve their situation They resulted in two opposite directions: "Often in a mentality of dependence" but also in "stimulating various reform movements in Hinduism and development programmes by the Government" (n. 75). The Statement concludes, however, with the admission that caste discrimination has crept even into the life of the Church. "It is sad that various forms of discrimination still persist within the Church, that Dalit Christians are kept at the periphery of Church life. They legitimately claim for a better participation in the leadership within their churches " The Church is challenged to a fuller recognition of the potentialities of the Dalits and to examine her attitude towards them "in the light of Christ's message of justice and liberation" (n 76)

This statement briefly sums up a dark chapter in the history of the Church in India the ongoing separation of caste Christians from Dalits in churches and cementeries, the caste mentality found even among the clergy and in religious communities, the protest movements of Dalits all over India, the foundation of the "Dalit Christian Liberation Movement" in 1987 in Tamilnadu, the repeated boycott of Church services by Dalits on Social Justice Sunday The last pastoral Lenten Letter of Archbishop Casimir of Madras in 1993 was devoted to the sin of casteism He accents that the complaints of the Dalits are justified, he promised better recognition of Dalits in appointments for leading ecclesiastical positions In the same letter, however, he calls all to go beyond legal adjustments to a greater sensitivity of the feelings of Dalits in everyday life Problems of social status and appropriate participation in Church leadership are the outcome of a deeper evil the lack of true community It is unfair to be excluded from positions of leadership on the basis of caste it is humiliating if a guest coming to my house refuses a cup of tea because it has been touched by me.

Our reflections on the Day of Justice cannot be limited to the need of correcting legal inequalities, exploiting and paralysing structures (they are most important and must be taken care of by the proper authority), but must be centred on the Christian attitude towards the neighbour offered to us in the Gospel

Jesus lived in a world of many discriminations the chosen people of Israel and the pagans, the law-abiding observers of traditions and sinners, people ritually pure and those contaminated by impurities. It was not his task to tackle the problems legally, but he lived in and preached about a true human community of equals In the invitation to God's Kingdom, extended to all, all human differences become irrelevant: social, ethnic, religious His life and death became an overwhelming demonstration of what the Christian struggle against unjust

discriminations should be.

Though Jesus' mission is for Israel, his concern is not limited by ethnic barriers. The Gospels give the story of the healing of the Roman officer's servant (Lk 7.1-10) and the daughter of a Syrophoenician woman (Mk 7:24-30). Jesus accepts the consequences of his association with the rejected· in his very first chapter Mark tells us the story of the leper who falls at Jesus feet, and Jesus *touched* the man Was this necessary? Was it a mistake? Jesus' knew the customs. As a consequence "he could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places" (Mk 1.45) Jesus' association with disrespectable society, with tax-collectors and sinners, was notorious and became a source of constant attack One of these sinners was called to close discipleship — Levi. Jesus' presence at his farewell party became a scandal (Mk 2:13-17) Jesus had meals with Pharisees and respectable people, e.g., at Bethany, but also with the marginalized He answered the objections with the purpose of his mission. "Those who are sick need the doctor" (Mk 2 17). He illustrates his attitude with the triple parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son (Lk 15).

Jesus becomes our Saviour not by doing something for us but by becoming one of us, member of our sinful, broken, poisoned human family This mystery of salvation, of his redeeming us through his unbreakable solidarity with our sinful world, is shockingly demonstrated in his death "Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed There they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left" (Lk 23·37f). Paul translates this symbolic demonstration into theological language "God made him who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5 21). For the actual practice in the Church he translates it once more into plain secular language: "All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3 27f)

A Christian celebration of the Day of Justice should make us conscious of the actual social and legal injustices in society and the Church. But this is not enough legal battles often lead to the hardening of opposite fronts, deepening the separating gulf, poisoning relationships and estranging minds The sense of unity, solidarity, mutual concern must grow Wounds must be healed, not only individual pain but the collective feelings of oppression, helplessness, dependence must be redeemed The self-image of the exploited castes must be raised and integrated into national solidarity with a common responsibility for the country The transforming process must first take place in the Church itself. Only a community truly one in Christ can become a leaven in the Indian society.

Book Reviews

Social Transformation

Hosea. By G.I. DAVIES. Grand Rapids/London: Wm.B. Eerdmans/Marshall Pickering, 1992. Pp. 315 £ 12 99. ISBN 0-8028-0657-2/0-551-02445-3.

This fine commentary belongs to the *New Century Bible Commentary* series. We reviewed a short study of Hosea by Davies earlier this year (*VJTR*, April 1994, 257f) The major features of this commentary are the careful attention to exegetical detail, the brief discussion about prior scholarly work, the attention given to the problems rising from the poor state of the Hebrew text and the consequent confusing differences in contemporary English translations

A characteristic of the exegesis and approach is Davies's balanced judgment about disputed questions and his rejection of eccentric or far-fetched solutions to problems He stays close to the text, archeological evidence and mainline scholarship He does not simplify either, and allows uncertainty to remain

I judge he is probably correct to interpret ch 1 as an extra-marital relationship and ch 3 as another relationship He rescues the term *hesed* from an exclusive covenant background (special Excursus), provides a good account of Baal worship from Ugaritic sources and spells out the traditional theology related to Exodus and Covenant prevalent in the major northern shrines of Bethel and Dan which Hosea uses and critiques. Davies sees evidence of this thought in Pss 80 and 81 He insists on the radical nature of Hosea's prophetic critique of the theology and related religious practices and the patterns of life of the rulers. He summarizes Hosea's thought: "Just as his prophetic predecessors had not been afraid to denounce evil and threaten disaster of a limited kind (cf 6:5), so he called in question any complacent interpretation of the traditions, only in a yet more radical way For him the very apparatus of the shrines (images, sacrifice, priesthood) had fallen under the judgment of the God who demanded only 'knowledge of God' — that is, recognition of himself, his actions and his demands (4:6, 6:6), which are summed up in the word 'loyalty' And so the nation, deprived of the protection which it thought to find in its worship, was exposed to the full consequences of its departure from observance of Yahweh's demands for justice in society (4 1-2, 10 12, 12 6), reverence for life (1 4, 6 8-9, 7 7, 13 14) and avoidance of foreign alliances (5 13; 7·8 11, 8·9, 10 4) No old prophecy (1 4), no covenant (1·9), no king (13 10) could save it when the only real Saviour (13 4) appeared no longer as the Shepherd (Ps 80 1) but as a wild animal (5 14, 13 7-8) The 'No' of Hosea to all that was most precious to Israel could not be more emphatic And yet, it seems, that same unsettling ability to think new thoughts on the basis of received tradition which is characteristic of written prophecy enabled him also to speak of a new beginning beyond the 'end', for which he uses the language of the traditions once again Exodus (11 11), wilderness (2 14-15), covenant (2 16.23 — cf 2 19-20), answered prayer (2.21, 14:8), creation (2.22, 14 5-7) But he does speak of images or sacrifice (unless in 14.2) or priesthood" (pp.33-4) Davies agrees with the ideas about the ongoing interpretative process common to the prophetic books, yet also judges that Hosea had a specific message of hope in his long prophetic career which spanned the years 745 to 720s, the period of the break-up and end of the Northern Kingdom.

Davies does not attempt to force the oracles into neat form critical cat-

egories and allows the prophet and the redactors a greater freedom with forms of prophetic speech than other commentators (see pp. 34-35).

The commentary belongs to the historical critical tradition I missed an adequate theological exposition yet would use this book in any study of Hosea, as it is easy to handle, very informative and well argued.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Blessed Are the Peace Makers. Biblical Perspectives on Peace and its Social Foundations. Edited by Anthony J TAMBASCO New York/Mahwah. Paulist Press, 1989. Pp. viii-184 $ 8.95 (pbk) ISBN 0-8091-3027-0.

The book is the fruit of a task force set up by the Catholic Biblical Association (USA) to study the biblical foundations of peace against the background of the pastoral letter of the USA Catholic Bishops' Conference, *The Challenge of Peace*. Seven authors, including the editor, have written on the theme of peace and war in the Bible with a view to peace-making today In developing a theology of peace, the Bible occupies a central place

The seven chapters of the volume explore the themes of peace and war both in the Old and New Testaments. Anthony Tambasco in his introductory essay points to the need for a sound hermeneutic to relate biblical revelation to our contemporary concern for peace at the local and global levels In a hermeneutical process, "the Bible seems best approached for ethics not so much to obtain concepts and ideas, as to encounter God as agent in history" (p. 6) Fischer discusses with biblical examples from the Old Testament the theme of peace and war, speaking in relation to monarchy and war, holy war and prophetic peace with special attention to Maccabees and Esth... In all these narratives of stories, the biblical authors try to see God as agent in history Kathleen O'Connor attempts a hermeneutical reflection on women's culture and peace in Wisdom literature from a feminist perspective calling for "a new mythology of communion and compassion" in contrast to "patriarchal mythology of domination and subordination" (p. 41). Linking her reflection to women's culture, she points to the insistence of wisdom literature on the centrality of relationship, interconnection and reciprocity. She makes a strong plea for the evangelization of our patriarchal culture if we believe in the quality of relationship at the heart of peace.

Humphrey discusses exegetically and hermeneutically the Matthean beatitude 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God " The author understands that the peace-making refers to the task within the community By this the disciples become the salt and the light before the world. This has hermeneutical implications for our situation of conflict and our struggles for peace Reid explores the close link between a community of peace and a community of praise in the Gospel of Luke Those who work for peace do so from their conviction about the glory of God Glory to God and peace on earth go together "The glory of God is a human being fully alive and engaged in peace-making." What is glory to God in the heavens is peace on earth Narrating and proclaiming the wonderful deeds of God becomes a work of peace-making and an invitation to us to be a people of peace. Anthony Tambasco engages in a hermeneutic of principalities and powers in St Paul for the task of peace in our world He points to the political significance of powers in our world of state ideologies of power and control In all our struggles for justice and peace, Paul offers a vision of hope rooted in the faith that Christ has conquered the powers

Robert Daly explores the understanding of peace and conflict resolution in the patristic tradition in relation

to the N.T. and points to the changes in the Fathers' attitude on war and peace down the centuries David Whitten Smith makes a study of inspired authors and saintly interpreters on the theme of war and peace. He pays attention specifically to conflicts in the interpretation of scriptural passages on this theme If we want justice, do we need war? The question is whether the cross and the sword can go together One important problem is. how did "the saintly interpreters" holding different world views down the centuries reflect on the theme of war and peace with the apparent conflict between "the inspired authors"? This leads the author to argue for a discernment on authority, power and violence He opts for an active non-violence as in accordance with biblical faith and God's promises, and rejects the legitimacy of demonic distortions of authority and power

The study being the fruit of a task force does not pretend to be an exhaustive study on the theme of war and peace. It certainly highlights biblical perspectives on the social foundations of peace It can be a stimulus to further deeper studies of the theme

Fr. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Social Transformation — How Christ Went about It. A Study of the Methodology of Christ in Effecting Social Transformation By Yvon Ambrose and G Lobo, New Delhi Caritas India, 1993 Pp ix-109 Rs 25 $ 10

The purpose of the book, according to the authors, is not the discussion of Christological questions regarding the mystery of the God-man Jesus Christ. But presupposing the faith of the Church, it proceeds to examine the methodology and pedagogy of Jesus' action in proclaiming God's Kingdom and calling and gathering people to God's Community It specifically focuses attention on the ministry, deeds and words of the earthly Jesus without neglecting the fundamental significance of the resurrection and the Lordship of Christ. If one does not understand the approach of the authors, one may find it incomplete or inadequate. With this preliminary remark I would like to make the following comments.

The study comes out of a commitment to the people, especially those who are poor and oppressed It tries to look at the struggles of the people in the light of Jesus' actions and teachings Therefore, the authors discover the methodology offered by Jesus to promote God's Kingdom based on a community of peace, justice, equality, cooperation and sharing The authors' central question is, "How did Christ realize his vision of building the Kingdom of God, namely a new just and humane society and what was the methodology he employed to achieve it?" (p 5).

While studying this question, the authors' methodology is contextual The context of Jesus' situation in Palestinian society and the present day social context are linked Linking of these two contextual settings is brought about by means of two perspectives One is to look at the teachings and actions of Jesus from the vantage point of an insider, but in a critical way The other is to commit oneself to one's faith which provides the crucial breakthrough so very fundamental to transform the status quo

The study has seven chapters The first one serves as an introduction to the whole book The following chapters reflect on these points a critical analysis of the society of Palestine at the time of Jesus, the preparation of Jesus for his work; the base of support he creates for himself and for his people — building a support base among ordinary people is one element of the methodology Jesus used to motivate and empower people to change themselves and their community Further, the mode of selection and formation of the core group is studied, and Jesus' actual interaction with several social groups like the poor and the powerless, the rich and the pow-

erful, the religious and political powers and non-Jews and women is analysed, as this shows how Jesus actualized his vision. The final chapter ends with a reflection on the post-resurrection period making Christ meaningful and relevant to all those who are committed to the cause of social transformation today

It is a good handbook for those who are committed to the people's empowerment and social transformation, irrespective of culture, caste and creed Moreover the practice and method of Jesus discussed in this book offers a pedagogy fundamentally significant for any transforming action

Joe BRITTO, S.J.

Creating Relevant Rituals. Celebration for Religious Education By Chris HARRIS. Newtown E.J Dwyer, 1992 Pp 116 $ 9 95 ISBN 0855 744200

In recent decades there has been a revival of interest in the study of rituals and symbols both at the grassroot and academic levels it has also become a matter of interest for various human sciences like Sociology, Anthropology and the History of Religions And in contemporary times, more particularly, there is a special concern to relate these human sciences to Liturgical Theology to explain the dynamics of rituals "Creating Relevant Rituals," with the subtitle 'Celebration for Religious Education', is one of the important works in this area

The approach taken in this book is interdisciplinary The author sets out a body of anthropological theory, which he applies to the practice of religious education. In this process, he treats some basic questions like Why is ritual important? What is this particular ritual about? from the standpoints of cultural anthropology, theology and scripture studies.

The book has five chapters with a special introduction and conclusion. The first three chapters explain the elements of ritual which are symbols, actions and expression of meaning Chapter 4 and 5 contain the important contributions of the author. In these two chapters he examines symbolic actions in terms of structure and antistructure, a notion which points out the importance of art structure as a place of freedom to create meaningful and relevant rituals.

The main features of this book are: (i) it shows that cultural anthropology can make a significant contribution to religious education, (ii) it offers many examples of actual rituals such as the celebration of children's first day at school, the farewell to a much loved teacher, a family celebration for a daughter who has reached maturity, an Advent ritual, an alternative Christmas celebration, supportive rituals for an AIDS patient, pre-confirmation rituals, etc. (though the examples cited in the book are from the first world perspective, it is a good model to create rituals according to the global context), (iii) it provides many anecdotes which make the content of the book come alive, and (iv) it offers practical hints to plan strategies for creative action Finally the author makes a plea to religious educators· "Religious educators can bring new life to liturgy if they do the hard work of planning and implementing strategies that help people explore the theological depths of liturgy and apply their explorations to ordinary living"(p 109)

This book is a challenge to religious educators, parents and parish workers to give pride of place in value education to self-generated ritual It is a rich resource for teachers and administrators in the field of religious education. It will be a great help to practitioners and students of religion to understand better the contribution of the social sciences to religious studies

Joe BRITTO, S.J.

Redeeming the Creation. The Rio Earth Summit Challenges for the Churches By Wesley GRANBERG-

Michaelson Geneva: WCC Publications, 1992. Pp. 90 $ 6.95. ISBN 2-8254-1091-8.

The Earth Summit at Rio was a remarkable event in the annals of world history when most of the political leaders gathered together to arrive at certain common understanding and concrete remedial steps to face the ecological crisis. Now this Earth Summit belongs to the past. Given the tremendous amount of preparation that went before it, the enormous amount of money spent in it, and the expectations it created we may ask, Did it achieve its purpose?

This book under review presents a well-balanced analysis of Rio June 1992 and sees its unrealized dreams as challenges to the churches What the States and the Heads of the States have failed to actualize, the churches can achieve by being catalysts of positive action in redeeming the creation. Thus, in the midst of a gloomy and dismal picture, there is an element of hope running right through the book.

This book opens with a beautiful description of the statue of Christ, the Redeemer, watching over everything going on in Rio Rio represents a miniature world with its scenic beauty, the scandalising deprivation and poverty of the vast majority, and the unjust accumulation of wealth by a few

There were three international meetings going on simultaneously at Rio the official Earth Summit at Riocentro with representatives from 178 nations, the Global Forum at Flamengo Park in downtown Rio, bringing together 7000 organizations and over 1400 NGOs, and the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Meeting at Baixada Fluminense, with 176 people from 70 different churches from 54 countries.

In three chapters, the author gives a brief and condensed account of the events and deliberations at these places with well-balanced critical comments and observations at the appropriate places.

The first two chapters deal succinctly with the problem, its causes and their effects. This forms a background for a critical analysis of the meetings themselves. In the analysis, G-M contrasts the Earth Summit with the WCC Ecumenical Meeting, brings out the challenges and questions and concludes with a hopeful note about the churches' role.

The author rightly perceives the root of today's crisis to be the mode of development followed vigorously in the North and relentlessly imposed on the South under the rubric of globalization. Investment by the North in the South has resulted more in economic bondage than freedom, and many countries have been caught in the debt trap The pressing need of the hour is to develops new goals, models and visions What the Earth Summit has achieved in this regard is very inadequate.

At Riocentro, the Earth Charter on the rights and obligations regarding the Earth itself, with its present and future generations, was adopted by Governments only as an agreed-upon declaration Agenda 21, though approved, does not have the status of legally binding agreement Financial commitments for implementing Agenda 21 became the most controversial issue While the global spending on the military is in the order of $ 1 trillion per year, the Rio Summit could only agree for $ 6 to 7 billions for Agenda 21 The actual need was $ 125 billions a year A climate treaty was agreed upon without any specific time schedule for implementation The role and impact of TNCs, IMF, WB, GATT were not touched upon at all

Having critically analysed the official Earth Summit, in the last four chapters the author turns his attention to Baixada Fluminense The aim of WCC meeting was to educate, assist and strengthen its own member churches in their awareness of UNCED and their

Contd. on page 434

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Vol. LVIII | AUGUST 1994 | No. 8

VJTR 58 (1994) 473-484

An Emerging Indian Theology

Some Exploratory Reflections

M. AMALADOSS, S.J.

Well-known Indian theologian Fr Amaladoss (Borgo S. Spirito, C.P. 6139, 00195 Roma) takes stock of the process of Indian theology not by way of a historical survey but by bringing out what is new in its method — its starting point in the experience of God in history, its focus on life, and its search for inspiration and motivation for life, its interreligious setting, its symbolic language open to a plural interpretation, its holistic approach to identity-in-difference, its advaitic relating of mystery to history In a second part next month he will analyse various themes of Indian theology where these characteristics are discernible.

Part I: Approaches

Whenever we reflect about the Church in India and its mission, we speak about the need for inculturation. One of the fields in which inculturation is needed is theology. Though the teaching and learning of theology in Seminaries follow the classical treatise system that we have inherited, Indian theologians have been more and more active in reflecting on questions that arise out of the experience of the Church in India. One can speak of a history of Indian theologians, if not of Indian theology.

While it is true that we do not yet have an *Indian Theology* as a well-articulated system, I think that a framework is emerging. There are questions and reflections that are new There are elements of method that are different. But these often get lost in the traditional atmosphere that we have inherited. Even when we take up new questions we tend to discuss them in the traditional way in which we ourselves have been trained. At times

we do not do anything more than pastorally apply principles that we have borrowed from elsewhere.

In this situation, becoming aware of the emerging trends in Indian theology may be helpful. We could then focus on these and develop them further more systematically. From this perspective I shall make an effort to become aware of such merging trends and to share them with any one interested. I would like to underline the tentative character of my exercise. I am not presenting a survey of Indian theologians of the past and the present and the questions they are raising. I am reflecting on what I see as the challenges facing us in the immediate future, but based on developments in the immediate past.

I think that in a general way the newness of Indian theology comes from three factors. There is a new method that starts reflection from the living context and experience. Our experience of religious pluralism gives rise to new questions in every area of theology. Thirdly, the holistic world view of our culture makes us reflect on our questions and experience in a new way. These points will become more clear as I proceed with my reflection.

A New Idea of Theology

Theological reflection arises out of the 'encounter' between the experience of life and reality and a living tradition of faith These are not two different things, but two elements in the life of a community The community receives its faith through a tradition made up of scriptures, liturgy and doctrinal development This tradition is meaningful only in so far as it has a transforming impact on the life of the community. The community, conditioned by the context of its life, tries to find its significance in the horizon of its faith vision. Thus the life and the faith of the community are in an ongoing dialectical relationship

For example, the community receives from its faith tradition the vision of the Reign of God, proclaimed by Jesus, as a new humanity of freedom and fellowship, justice and love, which it is challenged to become In the context of its own life the community appropriates to itself this vision. In the process, on the one hand the faith vision prophetically criticizes unjust and unfree aspects of the life of the community. On the other hand, the faith vision does not remain abstract and 'eternal', but is

interpreted so as to become a relevant challenges to a contemporary living situation. The process of questioning and reflection can arise in both areas: in understanding and prophetically judging life as it is lived here and now and proposing an alternative in the light of the Reign of God; and in interpreting the faith vision received from scripture and tradition in order to make it relevant to the contemporary situation.

Let me now unpack this brief description of the process of theologizing, not in the abstract, but with reference to what is happening in India. We can then start perceiving emerging elements of an Indian theology

A Different Starting Point

The starting point and context of theological reflection is the experience of faith in the life of the community. Our understanding of this has been influenced from two directions. Over the last fifteen years or so Latin American liberation theology has had an impact on India. We have learnt to start theological reflection from below by analysing *reality*. This analysis was called 'social' and tended to remain economic and political and to look at other aspects of life like culture and religion from that point of view. From people rooted in Indian religious tradition the demand has come that theology must start from *experience*, particularly the experience of God. One can see that an integration of these two perspectives is already taking place. God is experienced, not in the abstract, but in the world and in history, in the life and the community of people. Integral justice and liberation must take into account the cultural and spiritual aspects besides the economic and political ones. The emergence of Dalit theologies has highlighted the social dimension. The quest for experience points to the personal, psychological factors.

Thus we see the emergence of an integral analysis of society which could be systematized into a framework that includes economics-politics, person-society and culture-religion. Economics analyses the structures of ownership, production and commerce. Politics focuses on the mechanism of power and control in the community. While status and kinship, caste and ethnicity condition social relationships, the person seeks to grow and exercise freedom and initiative though caught in a network of structures and conditionings. Culture provides the symbols through which we look at, live and celebrate life and community. Reli-

gion, is a mixture of legitimations and prophetic challenges in the name of the Ultimate. All these elements are interrelated. Though the proper field of theological reflection is religion, it cannot be authentic, adequate and relevant if it is not done in the context of life as a whole.

Any one who is familiar with traditional theology can immediately see how this view of theology is different. At the risk of seeming to caricature it, we can describe the traditional approach in the following way. The object of faith and theology is a body of truths expressed in the creeds and spelt out over the centuries in the dogmatic tradition. The dogmatic tradition itself is not the result of a peaceful understanding and deepening of the faith, but arises out of a context of polemics with 'heretics'. This context evidently conditions both the aspects of the truths highlighted and the form of expression. Theology is then seen as an effort to understand, explain and defend this body of truths. The process of doing this in a continuing polemical context against heretics and non-believers and in dialogue with various philosophical schools that offer particular types of intelligibility gives rise to a system of treatises. Once we have a system mediated by a particular philosophy, then the concern is to show how the whole treatise can be deduced from a few first principles that come from the scriptural or dogmatic tradition. We descend from the heights of systematic theology to the plains of ordinary life, deducing practical applications from universal principles, in moral and pastoral theologies which are further conditioned by positive law, etc In recent years the theological system is introduced by appropriate inquiries into scriptural and historical (patristic) sources But the system provides the framework Even today we have not really moved away from this approach One has only to look at a Handbook of any seminary to see theological topics neatly separated into scriptural, historical, systematic, moral and pastoral sections, though team teaching is sometimes advocated. The focus remains the 'treatise'.

One can now see the contrast between the two approaches to theology, one centred on a system of truths that can be applied to life, and the other centred on life, seeking inspiration and motivation from the faith tradition For the latter, system-making is secondary, perhaps not even necessary. It is not surprising then that Third World theologies are looked down upon

by the First World systematic theologians as 'pastoral' theologies, unworthy of serious attention. It would not take long for the Third World theologians to return the compliment by pointing to the 'ivory tower' irrelevance of their First World counterparts, whose systematic theology dialogues with other intellectuals in the university but does not relate to the life of the ordinary people or of tontemporary youth in search of meaning in life. It is important to understand that we do not reject either dogmatic tradition or systematic reflection. The dogmatic tradition belongs to our faith tradition and, like God's own self-revelation in the scriptures, will need to be interpreted in the context of our life today. One can reflect systematically — logically — without feeling the need to build a system, because we are moving in a world of symbols and mysteries. I shall come back to this point later.

An example may clarify the difference between the two approaches. A dogmatic approach to ecclesiology starts with the foundation of the Church by Jesus Christ. It goes on to prove that the Catholic Church is the one true Church founded by Christ because it is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Then it talks about the structures of the Church, especially of the Magisterium and of the charism of infallibility. Something may be said about mission at the end, though this may be kept for the treatise on missiology in pastoral theology. The whole treatise is apologetic and defensive. Today we would rather start with the experience of being a Church on mission in the world, the sacrament of Christ and of the Reign of God, the implications of mission for the Church and the structures necessary for its life and mission. Similarly, the treatise on Sacraments is conditioned by Protestant denials countered by the Council of Trent. Christology is still haunted by the early heresies.

To start reflecting on our experiences is also to become aware of our double identity as heirs to two different religious traditions. We are in the era of inter-religious dialogue. Dialogue can be interior and personal. When we speak of our faith experience, it is a Christian faith, yet not as excluding other religious perspectives but as integrating them. Other religions are seen not as adversaries or even collaborators only, but as part of our own roots. Thus an inter-religious dimension is integral to the process of theological reflection. This has not yet affected seriously our theological praxis.

Symbols and Social Sciences

When theological reflection starts with an analysis of the life experience and leads to a praxis aiming at building up the Reign of God, then the social and the human sciences become essential mediations and tools in the process. Economic and politics, psychology and sociology, cultural anthropology and religious studies, help us not only to analyse and understand our life experience but also to concretize our options for action in view of building up a new humanity. Philosophy, apart from providing a tool and training for systematic reflection, will be part of the cultural and religious studies. Scholastic philosophy used to claim to be the philosophy of the common person Today we are sensitive to cultural differences and suspect that that common person was perhaps very much graeco-mediaeval European. As we shall see later, scholastic philosophy reflects an Aristotelian view of the universe based on 'physics', where we reach across to reality out there and understand it in terms of causes and effects. Even in Europe existentialists and phenomenologists have found this inadequate to analyse and understand personal and interpersonal experiences It is even more inadequate when it confronts the advaitic universe in India and the yin/yang harmony of China But my point here is that any philosophy is inadequate to understand fully the life experience of a community. We need the help of the human and social sciences. However, in using the tool of the sciences we must also be careful of the philosophies and ideologies that underlie them For instance, we can use Marxian and Freudian insights to understand social and intra-personal structures without subscribing to their philosophical presuppositions or extrapolations

It is at times said that Indian theology prefers symbols to concepts. There is truth in this But this has to be understood properly All peoples use symbols as well as concepts. We cannot reflect or argue without concepts But the question is whether concepts stand by themselves or come from and go back to symbols. One could make four kinds of reflections. First of all, our life experience is complex and finds expression in a variety of symbols — not so much single symbols, though there are some powerful ones, but complexes of symbols like myths, stories, rituals, art forms in various media such as plastic arts, music, dance, etc., and in other symbolic structures of the community that are concretized in economic and socio-political struc-

tures. We cannot understand and analyse these as we could analyse a brief philosophical principle that links two concepts in a judgement.

Secondly, concepts are normally abstracted from sense experience. In religion and theology we are dealing with human and divine realities that transcend sense experience. It is commonly accepted today that symbols are more adequate for indicating such realities than concepts. Clear and distinct ideas may help clarity; but they do not provide depth. Analogy may help concepts to transcend their own denotation, in a negative way. But it does not come anywhere near the richness of symbols, though ultimately symbols themselves have to be transcended. Before the Ineffable, all that we can say is *neti, neti* — not this, not this!

My third observation with reference to symbols is that they need interpretation As Paul Ricoeur said: "Symbols give rise to thought." Such thought can be as rigorous and systematic as any deductive reasoning. It is interpretative rather than logical. For that reason it may be richer and more complex. But interpretation is conditioned by the person interpreting and the context in which it is done. Hence there can be a plurality of interpretations None of them need be final. All are complementary and mutually enriching. Whereas a concept can give rise only to one line of deduction, a symbol can evoke a multiplicity of interpretations. The four Gospels were four interpretations, not only of the Jesus event, but also of his parables and teaching.

Fourthly, symbolizing and interpreting symbols are not elite activities Rather, ordinary people are at home with symbols. This theology is far from being an elite activity, as conceptual theology tends to be Every person is capable of insights, though a professional may be needed to elaborate them.

When we are moving in the world of symbols and interpretations we will understand the 'objective' and 'subjective' dimensions of truth in a new way. While deductive thought may claim some abstract 'objectivity', interpretation is conditioned by the interpreter. This is called the 'hermeneutical circle'. But the circle is not such that the interpretation is a subjective creation. It is the interpretation of a symbol, which is there, which has been inherited through tradition and expressed in scripture or ritual. Yet what one sees in a symbol depends also on what one is. No one can claim to have grasped a symbol fully, once

for all. One's own grasp of the symbol may develop in time according to new situations and experiences. Therefore no one can say that one's interpretation of a symbol is alone or completely adequate. Categories of truth and falsehood that are applicable to concepts and their perception cannot be applied in the same way to symbols and their interpretation.

A Holistic Approach

Focusing on experience, rather than on concepts, has two further consequences in the Indian context. We often hear that the Indian approach to reality and experience is holistic. It tends to hold together aspects that others seem to find contrary or even contradictory. I think that this is not a logical problem, identity as non-contradiction, but a fact of life where different elements may co-exist in the same person or situation even if they are in constant tension. For example, in the abstract, 'proclamation of the Gospel' and 'dialogue with other religions' are two different concepts. One can define one in opposition to the other But in practice when a Christian lives together with a person of another religion he or she witnesses and dialogues at the same time The proclamation is dialogical and dialogue involves witnessing to one's faith convictions. One or other approach may predominate at a given movement according to circumstances But both are lived together, even if one experiences them in tension Approaching them in an 'either/or' way would lead to the subordination of one to the other. Similar dichotomies like nature-supernature, body-soul, human-divine, sacred-secular, priest-lay, church-world, etc., are experienced in the same way

Holding two things together in this way supposes that each has an identity of its own, that one is not defined as the absence of the other. If identity is seen not as a positive characteristic in itself, but as non-contradiction, then it is impossible to hold the two poles together If proclamation is seen as not-dialoguing than one cannot proclaim and dialogue at the same time. One seeks to order them by subordinating one to the other. Dialogue is then seen as a preparation, or an element, or a means, of proclamation.

A symbolic approach to reality can understand and accept identity-in-difference. This is what I consider the *advaitic* principle. But a point of view based on the principle of contradic-

tion can only understand identity or difference: one thing is or is not another: it cannot be both. For example, the Church is the sacrament of Christ. A sacrament is a symbol. But our tendency is to identify the Church with Christ and to attribute to it whatever we say about Christ. The uniqueness of Christ means the uniqueness of the Church. Any attempt to point to the limitations of the Church is seen as an attack against Christ. Even divine action outside the Church is attributed to the Spirit and not to Christ. Any thing linked to Christ must be linked to the Church also.

Similarly, we hear people affirm that Jesus not only proclaimed the Reign of God but realized it in himself so that we can say that the Reign of God is above all a person, Jesus Christ. One can accept this as a symbolic affirmation that points to the deep, even organic, links between Jesus and the Reign of God. But when the deep link becomes an identity so that promotion of the Reign of God is the same thing as the proclamation of Christ, which again is the same thing as the building up of the Church, then one can say that in pointing to elements of identity one is ignoring elements of difference. We are today constantly facing this difficulty in theological discourse

Identity-in-difference can be compared with analogy. Analogy deals with predicates: a concept is predicated analogically of two different things which are similar in some ways. In other words, analogy handles similarity-in-difference between different objects. Identity-in-difference, on the contrary, deals with a complex reality which is one and yet not-one, or two and yet not-two. The Church is the Reign of God and yet the Reign of God is more than the Church. It is not apart from the Church. It is not different from it. And yet it is not completely identical with it The Church is limited, sinful, etc, in a way that the Reign of God is not. But the Church is, so to speak, the sacrament, the symbolic visibility and realization of the Reign of God. Analogy cannot handle this.

When a holistic approach based on a symbolic and experiential perspective is absent, then the verb 'is' affirming identity is taken too literally and any kind of differentiation is seen as a threat. We find a similar problem when 'subsists in' is considered as equivalent to 'is', which in turn is interpreted as identity, in the phrase: "The one true Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church." The underlying problem is a conceptual-

physical mentality that finds no place for symbol. The Church is the sacrament of salvation. Salvation is mediated by the Church. This is a positive affirmation. But following the principle of non-contradiction, we do not feel that this positive affirmation is safe if we do not affirm that salvation is mediated *only* by the Church and that outside the Church there is no salvation. Even if individuals are saved outside the Church, they are said to be be linked to the Church 'in some way'. The positive affirmation has to be bolstered up by a negative one which denies the contrary. I do not say that we must affirm the contrary. While we affirm our own positive experience, we could wait to explore and discover the other before rushing into an *a priori* negative statement. Phrases like 'in some way' indicate an *a priori* affirmation which we do not understand. Faith has to confront many mysteries. But the art of theology is not to see mysteries everywhere, but to keep them to a minimum.

In the pastoral area the hierarchy tend to be seen as a succession of identifications which leaves no room for the charismatic principle or subordinates it to the hierarchical. Thus we have: God — Jesus Christ — the Church — the Pope — the Bishop — the Priest. After this we come to the chasm between the sacred and the secular order of reality. This may look like a caricature And yet, how often in practice challenging a priest is interpreted as challenging the whole sacred order? How many find the idea of Dalits protesting against the Church or the Bishop acceptable? This is the reason why dissent in the Church is interpreted not only as disloyalty but as un-Christian. In a world governed only by the principle of non-contradiction, if one is not for, then one is against. There is no middle ground.

The Advaitic Principle

Another consequence of focussing on experience rather than on reality in itself is a second aspect of what I have called the 'advaitic principle'· the perception of the absolute in the relative. For example, a person loves me. He/she expresses that love in many symbolic ways a gift, a gesture . No expression can be adequate. I grasp the love of the other interpreting the symbols through which it is expressed. My interpretations are conditioned by my own personality and experience. The symbol becomes a 'relative' mediation of the 'absolute'. I cannot grasp the love independently of its symbolic mediation. But what I

grasp is not the limited symbol but the love that the symbol expresses. There is here a certain transcendence that reaches out to the deeper reality, but always in and through the symbol. Love becomes the horizon in which every symbol of it turns out to be meaningful and communicative. The symbol is a relative reality. What is true about our relationship to another person is even more true about our relationship to God. One can understand Gandhi seeking to realize the Absolute Truth through the relative truths of day-to-day existence and experience.

It must not be concluded from this that we relativize the absolute. What is relativized is not the absolute, but its experience mediated by symbol, and its interpretation. We are not constructing our own relative reality. Rather, we acknowledge that we have a relative experience of the absolute. The relative experience is not meaningful apart from the absolute presence that sustains it.

Such a symbolic approach to reality and experience may relativize our usual philosophical discourse about truth being the "adequateness" between the intellect and the object. We are not saying that the human person cannot know the truth. Nor are we saying that what we call objective truth is only an illusion of the mind or a fabrication of the intellect. Scholastic philosophy always fought against such points of view. Accepting that reality is knowable, we are just spelling out, very briefly, the concrete conditions and consequences of the process of knowing involving symbols and interpretation.

We could then say that the method of theological reflection that we see emerging in India highlights aspects in the theory of knowledge that may not have been sufficiently emphasized in our official philosophical tradition so far. One of the consequences is a certain openness to pluralism in theology. Another is that theology need not remain an elite pursuit, though we will always need experts and technicians, but can be taken up also by the people, so that we can foresee the emergence of peoples' theologies, whether they are peasants, workers, Dalits or the poor in general.

If questioning is the starting point for reflection, then a focus on the people and on experience will also spare us from the need to answer elaborately questions which nobody asks today. A discussion of questions raised by 'heretics' in the past can be of historical interest. But sometimes we get lost in questions

that may be asked by some philosopher in Germany which no one in India has even heard of. For instance, some years ago we used to discuss the evils of secularization when India was not getting secularized. Sometimes we need to unmask the question and the ideological or philosophical presuppositions behind it — that is, question the question — rather than spend time answering it. To some who say that they do not believe in God, the best answer may not be to 'prove' that God exists, but to examine the psychological dispositions and the philosophical presuppositions of their affirmation and challenge those. Sometimes theological reflection becomes an academic pursuit of an elite dialoguing, often fruitlessly, with the few intellectuals of the universities rather than answering the real questions posed by the majority of the people, who are often marginalized because of their popular religiosity. That is why people and experience constitute a good framework within which to pursue our theological reflection. It is more interesting and relevant to explore our own questions as they arise out of our struggle to live our faith in India today.

(to be concluded)

VJTR [illegible]

The Spirit of Dialogue

Dr Astrid LOBO GAJIWALA

After living for several years as a partner in a vibrant interfaith marriage the author reflects on the problems and the opportunities this experience offers. She shows how both partners try to steer a difficult course between an easy and superficial syncretism on the one hand and the negation of either faith on the other. The children in the family lead the way toward a deeper discovery of God in all things.

Inter-religious dialogue is at its most intimate in an interfaith marriage. There is nothing theoretical about the debate — everything is personal. There is no room for superficial acceptance of rituals when one is called upon to be a key performer. There is no possibility of lip-service when you are creating a life-time habit of family prayer. Tolerance itself becomes a bad word, suggesting superiority in a relationship that is all about mutuality. Living together is more than just a weekend experience, it is a lifetime of adjustment. And accepting different belief systems doesn't make it any easier to answer my daughter Gayatri as a three-and-a-half year old: "Ganapati Baba's mama and papa were Gods. Why Jesus' mama and papa are not Gods?"

When different religions are involved, even simple, everyday matters become issues for negotiation. Where else but in a "mixed" marriage would the celebration of festivals be seen as a threat to one's religious identity? Who else but an inter-religious couple would question the 'sign of the cross' or the 'jai, Shri Krishna' greeting that for most believers are unthinking reflexes? In a time of crisis, which deity is to be propitiated? Even a meal calls for adaptation if God is to be made present.

Of course, the easiest way out is to segregate religious practices. Treat religion as a private affair, and avoid intruding on the other's beliefs. An easy compromise ... until the transformation of a couple into a family begins.

For me, a Catholic, my Church's insistence on the baptism of my children brought the religious differences between my husband and me into sharp focus. It threatened the very possibility of our marriage. Suddenly religion was no longer a natural overflow of our shared experience. Instead, it became an imposition, depriving our children of the freedom to imbibe

religious truth irrespective of its origin (Rigveda I-89-1). One tradition had to be sacrificed in favour of another. One belief system had to be given priority, paving the way to claims of superiority. One particular understanding of the Truth was to control the immensity of God's revelation.

For my husband, Kalpesh, baptism meant nothing more than conferring a religious label. He perceived religious labels as names that stick with one throughout life. As one loves one's name and completely identifies with it, so does one accept religion. While he agreed that this had definite advantages in a "traditional" family, in a "bi-religious" family it could limit growth and make it difficult for us to expand beyond the prevailing mind-set of the religion of our birth. He believed that a divisive wall would always exist, one that would be difficult to break down.

Subsequently we discovered that baptism of the children is a major problem that we shared with most couples in mixed marriages. Perhaps the only interfaith marriage that remains unaffected by this demand of the Church is one in which the non-Catholic partner is not much concerned about religion. But even there, sometimes the expectations of the non-Catholic extended family have to be met In many instances, couples promise to baptize their children merely as an inconvenient formality that has to be fulfilled prior to a Church wedding. No attempt is made to honour the commitment after marriage. At other times, the children are baptised but are not brought up as practicing Catholics Catholic women particularly give in to pressure just to maintain peace in the family, and end up with feelings of guilt at going against the Church's teaching and fear of divine retribution and community ostracism. The most tragic, however, are those who in honesty admit that they cannot make such a promise, and so are denied a Church wedding Forever after they become fugitives, outcasts in their own community, furtively receiving the Eucharist in some parish in which they are unknown

"Are your children baptized?" is a question that haunts me in parish circles, during school admissions, in family get-togethers. It is a sensitive issue with no mitigating circumstances, not even for children who have grown to know and love Christ. I experienced this at a Women's Day Rally, when Kalpesh and I shared on "Equal Partnership in Marriage" (with no reference to reli-

gion whatsoever). As we stepped off the podium, I was confronted by a staunch Catholic. She accused me of setting a bad example to Catholic youth: "They will think that marriage to a Hindu is hunky-dory." I could understand her concern. I even admitted that it was probably wise to marry someone of the same religion, but did that mean that I must hide the truth and deny the possibility of a good marriage when two faiths are involved? Today, young adults will choose their life partners no matter what others may say. Isn't it better to expose them to the challenges that they have to face and the high level of commitment that is required in interfaith marriages? Who knows, perhaps this exercise might even dissuade some of them from taking the plunge!

Somehow, the Church has failed to come to terms with the reality of interfaith marriages. This is not the case, however, with Roman Catholic-Malankara Syrian Orthodox marriages that are on the increase in Kerala Thus in an agreement between the two churches published on January 25, 1994, it is acknowledged that if the children of Catholic-Syrian Orthodox unions are to make informed choices about their Church membership when they are older, they must have a solid formation in *both* churches. To this end, the agreement warns against giving in to the temptation of giving full responsibility for religious formation to one spouse only or neglecting religious education in order to avoid conflict. Rather, the couple is encouraged to give their children as full a formation in the tradition of both churches as possible.

Unfortunately the same consideration is not afforded to couples in interfaith marriages. There is no question of adult children being left to make an informed choice with regard to religion. The ideal is still an exclusively Catholic upbringing of the children with the possible conversion of the non-Catholic partner. Such exclusive claims, however, raise basic theological questions about God's relationship with the whole of humanity and the vastness of God. Further, they contradict Christian teaching that faith is a gift, and Christ chooses us through no merit of our own (Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 2.5; Eph 2:8-9). The Vatican documents also speak of salvation for all, and the recognition of the revealing voice of God in other religions forms the raison d'être of inter-religious dialogue. None of this, however, has been translated into a pastoral approach designed to make of mixed marriages a sacrament.

Instead, religious labels are insisted upon. There is no recognition of the fact that in an inter-religious family such labels can ensure religious identity only at the cost of family harmony. They can raise barriers to intimacy, alienate one parent, disturb the marital union, and divide the family unit into Catholics and non-Catholics. In the end, whatever their label, children in such marriages will be exposed daily to different forms of worship and learn to accept different responses to God. As Gayatri, now almost five, puts it: "There is one God and She comes in different bodies and in all names," and if Jesus is dead on Good Friday, well then, Krishna can always come to your rescue!

As a Christian, for me the challenge lies in being an instrument of Christ outside the security of Church structures By my words and actions I have to prepare my children to recognise and answer the Master's call My example must bear the scrutiny of questioning minds that have roots in more than one belief system It makes for an intensity that has no room for a "Sunday Catholic " There's nothing like a little "competition" to keep you on your toes!

Sadly, the institutional Church offers me little support. Despite the increase in mixed marriages (10% of Church weddings in Bombay in '92-93), we have not progressed beyond addressing such couples with censure and sometimes misinformation. Mixed couples have enough negative baggage to begin with without adding to it by manipulating statistics of annulled marriages to present a frightening picture Worse, insensitive pastors sometimes suggest registration under "The Special Marriage Act"[1] to facilitate a possible civil divorce Isn't marriage a risk for all couples? Aren't there Catholic couples whose marriages are at high risk because they are either not mature enough, or don't know each other very well? And in any event, isn't choosing "The Special Marriage Act" with divorce in mind on evidence of "defective consent"?

The Year of the Family (1994) provides a good opportunity for change Pastoral services to couples in mixed marriages could be initiated We could begin with fostering a more sensitive attitude: respect for the couple and their love, concern for the difficulties they will encounter and counselling by interfaith

[1] The Special Marriage Act has "mutual consent" as one of the grounds of divorce The Christian Personal Law has no such provision, and Catholic couples usually resort to perjury to obtain a civil divorce following an annulment granted by the ecclesiastical courts.

couples and a spiritual advisor who is open to the Spirit in other religions. These would go a long way towards helping the Church in its primary duty "to uphold the strength and stability of the union and the family life that flows from it" (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism*, 1993).

Another way would be to create a nuptial service with an inclusive liturgy that welcomes the non-Catholic partner and his or her family. Inculturation surely would find one of its best applications in such a situation, setting the stage for an ongoing dialogue between the two families.

Like the Bishops of Japan, perhaps our Bishops too could put out a pastoral on interfaith marriages. We need guidelines about how to respectfully participate in another's journey of faith without compromising our own. We need to learn how to enrich our own faith experience by opening up to other spiritualities. We need to know how to make prayer a uniting factor in the family even when two religions are involved. We need to explore the possibilities of bringing up children in two religious traditions. We need to overcome community prejudices by dispelling ignorance and avoiding hasty, ill-informed judgements. And, most important perhaps, without giving into the temptation of saying "we told you so," we need to reach out with compassion to Catholics in mixed marriages who are prevented from practicing their religion, or who are finding it difficult to keep their marriage commitments.

It is time we moved beyond our Christian confines and helped interfaith couples seek unity, using as a point of reference, their image and likeness of God (Gen 1 27). Through Christ who gathers all things unto Himself we can help them focus on God whose revelation knows no religious boundaries. Rootedness in God rather than religion must be our focus, so that we can "worship God neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem" but "in spirit and truth," just as God wants (Jn 4:21-23). It is one way of continuing our inter-religious dialogue with integrity.

Married to a Hindu whose love for and faith in the Divine is unmistakable, I find our marriage rich with promise. Perhaps it is that both of us strive to make God the Ground of Our Being, irrespective of the names we give Her/Him. Or maybe it [illegible] determination to make our marriage a true communion [illegible] ing each other's uniqueness, appreciating our differences, and allowing each other space to grow. Whatever the reason, our

diversity has become our strength, for marriage for us is a constant, conscious effort. Over the years we have slowly progressed from voicing fears and struggling with opposing viewpoints to overcoming prejudices and finally celebrating differences. This is reflected best, perhaps, in our prayer life.

From the start, we made prayer occupy a central place in our lives. The first year of marriage had us reflecting on the "Bhagavad Gita" and the New Testament. Our reflections were personal rather than scholarly, though we did use commentaries. Occasionally we argued about the practicality of a particular teaching and there were times when we even had a good laugh. But by and large we sought deeper insights into our own scriptures and at least a basic understanding of each others's.

Slowly, we began to construct our own religious framework. It encompassed Krishna's song with its delicate balance of action and detachment from the fruits of actions, and Christ's life that was a warm embrace of the human person. Through Kalpesh I began being exposed to spiritual giants whose vision of God entered and transcended the Christ of the gospels. Together we caught a glimpse of the God who is above any one religion. We were inspired to probe our inner beings and expand our concept of God My own image of God underwent a transformation Hinduism affirmed my yearning for a Mother God who had been denied to me for so long. It put me in contact with the Universal God whose revelation cannot be limited; the Cosmic God that links the past, the present and the future, the God of Creation that unites the human and the earth. Despite the restrictions of my Catholic conditioning, my understanding of God has been enriched The rites, rituals and dogmas of my institutional Church faded into the background (Gal 2:16). Moved by the Spirit my Hindu husband and I created a common platform for the exchange of our views, a common language that dispensed with explanatory footnotes and a common experience that strengthened our union.

On this foundation we built the prayer life of our subsequent years. Spontaneous prayers of thanksgiving as we look at our children, intense "letting go" as we struggle to make far-reaching decisions, petition prayers, prayers of repentance, these have been our invitation to God in our lives. Even the majestic hill outside our window with its many moods has found its place as a visible presence of our Creator. Watching its misty

veil slowly lift, or its lush green body bathed in rain, is, for both of us, a spiritual experience.

As our children grew older, however, we felt the need to demonstrate a unity in our prayer life especially if we were to give truth to what we were teaching them about the one Universal God. For our night prayers, therefore we chose a mixture of Sanskrit Shlokas, familiar Christian prayers and prayers our children have learnt at school. These have become "our" prayers, exclusive for "Hindu-Catholics"! We say them together, taking care to ensure that we give no cause for the children to demarcate "mummy's prayers" from "papa's prayers."

Despite this openness, however, we have had our limitations. Our joint prayers did not call on a personal God and we studiously avoided erecting an altar. The pluralism of Hinduism has no difficulty in accepting one more 'avatar' in Jesus. My monotheistic upbringing however, inhibited me from praying to the "Hindu" face of God. Always at the back of my mind I wondered about syncretism Would I be watering down my faith if I allowed (presumptuous me!) Christ to share the same space as Krishna? I took the easy way out and followed my daughter's advice. "Teacher says, 'close your eyes and think of God'."

Talking to Sr Sara Grant and Vandana Mataji, r.s.c.j., however, dispelled some of my fears. Through them I caught a glimpse of the God experience that integrates Hindu and Christian spirituality And as I questioned further, like Christ of the gospels Vandana Mataji said "Come and see" (Jn 1:39), and invited my family to her Ashram in the Himalayas. It is a journey we are determined to make as an essential part of our "pilgrimage to the eternity of God, an eternity where there will not be anything like a Church, but eternal life in which God gathers all whom he loves" (Karl Rahner)

Fortunately, rituals are not an important part of our lives. So far, Hindu festivals are celebrated with Kalpesh performing the pujas with me at his side, and Christian feasts are celebrated with all of us attending Mass. The Sunday Eucharist is an obligation I joyfully fulfill with my husband's blessings and my children's rather distracting company as I thwart their efforts to join the celebrant at the altar! Long ago I gave up expecting my husband to join me, as visiting a temple or Church is not part of his prayer life. Experience has taught us that unity sometimes

requires diversity. And so we follow our individual calling, sharing what we can, but also leaving the other free to participate or not. We have come to accept that for rituals to have value they must make God present. Thus, rather than falling out over traditional rituals, we create our own as we come together in our search for God. Somehow it has freed us from religious constraints making this "difference" an occasion to demonstrate our respect for each other and grow in our knowledge of God.

Our efforts at reconciling two religious traditions have borne some fruit. Much to the delight of our children we celebrate all the feasts, Hindu and Christian. What is more, our extended families have been drawn into this circle, coming together to burst crackers at Diwali, exchanging sweets, and attending religious ceremonies Always there is room for the unexpected like at my nephew's First Holy Communion when Gayatri led her Gujarati grandparents one by one to the cross and made them bow and say "Jai-Jai" Despite my apprehensions, our daughters have no difficulty accepting the different names of God, even if the eldest insists that Jesus speaks only English and Krishna understands only Gujarati!

Remaining true to our own religious identities, however, has been a challenge from time to time Initially, trivialities took on dangerous overtones and forced us to tread cautiously. Like in the matter of religious images Never being one for the veneration of holy pictures and statues, as a reminder of my commitment to Christ I settled for a simple cross in our bedroom, a handmade wedding present from one of my husband's Hindu friends My husband on his part was satisfied with an attractive image of Ganapati We were content

Then suddenly, all this changed We began receiving a deluge of holy pictures and statues from Kalpesh's well-meaning family Perhaps it was their way of ensuring the Hindu tradition of their progeny It made me nervous Maybe I should get a picture of Jesus, I thought Gayatri can then identify with him the way she does with the portrait of Krishna and Radha Match picture for picture, statue for statue. Our home would soon become a showroom with Kalpesh and I marketing our religious wares!

Fortunately, better sense prevailed We talked things over and decided to set limits to the religious articles that would adorn our home, even at the risk of offending relatives. As for

Gayatri, barely over a year old, she chose her own path. The cross was "Jesus" whether it was atop the Church or stuck on her doctor father's windshield. And her daily ritual was a gay "morning Jesus" or "Om shanti, Jesus" to the cross beside our bed. But just so that I didn't take her for granted, an occasional "Where's Jesus?" would have her pointing to the picture of Radha and Krishna across the room, and Kalpesh's "say namaste to Ganapati baba" would have her bowing with a cheerful "morning Jesus." She had made the divine connection effortlessly and was a few steps ahead of us already!

But everything isn't always so easy. Without warning, our peace is disturbed by Gayatri She never ceases to question and assimilate, and sometimes discard.

"I don't want to hear stories about Krishna. I only want stories about Jesus. I like Jesus, because on his birthday Santa Clause brings everyone presents."

Her father looks at me accusingly. I search for words.

"But we celebrate Diwali You got presents, a new dress..."

"I didn't get presents, only money "

I am at a loss, I want to laugh but I see my husband's hurt look and stop. He wants so much that his children should reap the full benefit of two religions. His dream for them is true religious freedom But to reach that ideal, we have to work hard Not only must we impart to them our love for the Divine, but we have to exude warmth for and knowledge of the Spirit that guides each other Only then can we hope to prevent religious freedom from degenerating into religious bankruptcy. Like tailoring our simple customs to buy our children's devotion. Making Krishna into another Santa Claus.

Strangely enough, what ties me up in theological knots are the intricacies of my own religion. How does one explain the Trinity to a three-and-a-half year old? Even the simple Christmas story precipitates perplexing questions: "Mama Mary made Jesus, or Jesus made Mama Mary?"; or "Before Jesus was born there was no God?" And as Jesus went about his healing ministry, "Why did he pray to God? He is only God, no?"

Even my feminist attempts at reclaiming the male Godhead bring me more than I bargain for. "God is a man and a woman. Jesus also is a man and a woman, no?" I have difficulty with that, but she doesn't. "Then why everybody says Jesus is a man?" (Why, indeed!). "Because they don't know. But you know and I

know," I evade. "Why they don't know? They should know, because Jesus made them"! And to keep the balance, "Why only 'Hail Mary', why not 'Hail Joseph'?" Or for that matter "A-(wo)men"?!

The priesthood too poses problems. "Are you going to say your morning prayers?" I asked Gayatri when she was two years old. "No, I'll say Mass!" she replied. Two years later as she munches unblessed hosts on the way home from church she reassures me: "Mummy, you also can call Jesus into the host. Yes, Mummy, he'll come if you call him." I'm not prepared to deny that, whatever my Church says.

With the passage of time, one thing has become clear. Bringing up children in two different religions is definitely an invitation to creativity It means tuning in to the revealing voice of God in a strange tradition It requires consciously sidestepping the pitfalls of comparisons ("mine is the only way") and judgement ("your religion is full of superstition", "you all are obsessed with conversion"; "idol worshipper"). It calls for a sensitivity that allows a child the freedom to be, trusting in the child's inherent wisdom It makes a sense of humour imperative, a laughter that is an echo of the laughter of the "Gods" as they watch us ignorant mortals try to unravel the Divine Mystery. Most important, it forces us to move beyond the obvious. When two traditions, two cultures, and two belief systems are involved, every gesture and every explanation must be carefully thought out to avoid offence Every "truth" must be re-examined by going back to the Source Every religious practice must be put in its right perspective — essential or non-essential. Respect for the human person must be our guiding principle Our purpose must reflect the Divine Purpose of fostering a loving and united communion It is a good basis for inter-religious dialogue even in the wider community.

In the final analysis, like all true dialogue, an exchange between people of different faiths must begin with respect of the other and progress to discovering the Divine Presence that is within us all How real this Presence is was brought home to me during Holy Week We watched a Passion play, and Gayatri wept. The pain of Jesus was her pain. Finally she sat on my lap with her head on my breast. "I can see Jesus dead in your chest," she said Taken aback I asked, "How is that?" Pointing to my chest she replied, "Good is inside here, no?" It's that simple.

Any genuine pursuit of the truth must also necessarily search for ways of affirming religious uniqueness and allowing different ways of being. It is only when we shed our prejudices that we will be able to learn from another and approach God with the openness of a child. Like Nivedita, my two-and-a-half year old: "God is in the clock, on the wall, on the door, in Papa's cupboard, Ashutosh's towel, my dress, in the window, here and here, and there in the hills and gardens." To see God in all things, and all things in God, that is the Spirit of interfaith dialogue.

A Directory for Priests

In 1973 the Congregation for Bishops published a *Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* (see *Clergy Monthly* 38 [1974] 451-5) This was in response to the demand of Vatican II (CD 44) that a series of directories be published to facilitate the pastoral task of the Church. Twenty-one years later the Congregation for the Clergy has published a *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* (117 pp) which has been reprinted by the CBCI and is available for only Rs 20 Presumably the new Directory builds on the experience of the utility of the Directory for Bishops.

The Priests' Directory is structured on the themes of identity, spirituality and ongoing formation. It draws mostly from Vatican II and subsequent Popes, and especially on John Paul II's *Pastores dabo vobis* (see *VJTR* 56 [1992] 355-63) It quotes no other theologian except for an occasional reference to Church Fathers It takes a descending approach: the identity of the priest is trinitarian, christological, pneumatological, ecclesial, communion-centred The spirituality stresses prayer, preaching the Word, the sacraments, celibacy, obedience and poverty, devotion to Mary The Index records three references to the Rosary, one to Sacred Scripture The role of the Bible in the spirituality of the priest could be more articulated, as well as the ministry of dialogue and the concern for the concrete problems of the faithful, even material ones. Perhaps the most useful part is the third where concrete suggestions for ongoing formation, specially in the first years after ordination, are offered

The English translation is some what stilted (What is the meaning of: "Particular emphasis was given to the theme of communion, a demand specially felt today, with its imminent presence in the life of the priest"? — p. 5.) Like the Episcopal Directory, this one is addressed to the priests of the Latin Church. But all priests may want to read parts of it during their days of recollection.

G.G.-S.

VJTR 58 (1994) 496-499

The Yoga of Laughter

VANDANA Mataji, r.s.c.j.

By definition laughter is something we all enjoy Here the 'Guru' of the Jeevan Dhara Ashram (Jaiharikhal, Garhwal Dt, UP 246139) shows the connection of laughter with spirituality and yoga She encourages us to be like the legendary three Chinese monks who spread laughter in the villages and towns of their country, in life and in death

Yoga or "Union with God" must be joyous, for the Spirit of God is Joy Ananda! We often think of life on earth being a warfare and a path of thorny suffering. We think profound laughter and lasting happiness can be ours only after this life ('the pie in the sky'!) Yet Jesus is our Joy. He promised: "My Joy no one can take from you" — unless we allow it to be taken from us. I do believe that the Spirit who is Joy could not have left the innermost depth of Jesus even when he hanged on the Cross in anguish of body and mind

Why then do we Christians come across as people who always stress the Cross? True, the Cross is our symbol — the vertical and horizontal, the feminine and the masculine in us must be harmonised, so that we become yogic. "Yoga is harmony" the Gita teaches us But does that prevent us from showing joy and smiling and laughing? Nietzsche, the German sceptic, rightly asked· "If these Christians believe they are redeemed, why don't they look more redeemed?"

Some people say "Nowhere in the gospels do we see Jesus laughing " John ended his gospel by reminding us that if everything Jesus said and did had been recorded, "the world would not hold all the books that would have to be written." And he began his gospel by recording that the very first act of Jesus' public life, after calling his first disciples, was to go to a wedding feast — for the celebration of love! He often accepted invitations to places which some would not deign to frequent —

sinners', publicans' and tax collectors' houses. Can we imagine that at these parties Jesus would not have laughed? And played with children whom he so attracted? And not show his mirth at the follies of so many of his own disciples?

We have in our ashram a picture of the laughing Christ. I love to watch the first reactions of our visiting sadhakas. They never quite seem to take it for granted, so used are we to seeing pictures showing Jesus solemn and sad. But laughter is a part of life and is meant to be so. Risibility is a 'property' of a human being, as Aristotle would remind us. Seeing funny things, their funniness, often coming from some inappropriateness, something unexpected, absurd, illogical, irrational, somehow releases tensions that have mounted up in us. In deep friendships there is often laughter, a laughter that is understood and shared by people on the same wavelength without the need for explanations or words. I remember Swami Chidanandaji saying how he and Swami Abhishiktananda — both monks/sannyasis, one a Hindu the other a Christian, being so happy together in silence, that they just sat and laughed! Laughter is not only the best remedy for sickness — as a noticeboard hanging in an Ashram Dispensary in Rishikesh reminds passersby — but also the best relaxation that makes tensions explode out of our system

Laughter is of different kinds. The first is laughing at another's expense. This is the lowest, meanest and most vulgar, revealing one's insecurity, insensitivity, and violence. Jesus could never have experienced this laughter, nor could the Buddha nor any of the saints, sages or mystics who have hearts of *compassion* and have "suffered with" others.

The second kind of laughter is very good and should be cultivated, it brings peace, equilibrium, *samatvam*, which is yoga. That is the capacity of laughing at oneself Recall how G.K. Chesterton describes his pudgy self running along the road after his hat which the wind had whisked away! Mulla Nasruddin in all his jokes proves himself the stupid one, never someone else. That kind of laughter, I think, is true humility.

The third kind of laughter — like the third degree of humility of St Ignatius — is the highest. Osho calls it "cosmic laughter" One laughs neither at others nor at oneself, but at the situation as a whole — an infinite vastness of which we can neither see nor understand the beginning or the end, but we know that the whole cosmos is moving, so beautifully, so sys-

tematically, so purposefully, even though we need the "third eye" of Siva, or the "gift of faith" to perceive this. It requires a real trust in the Lord of Love, the cause and goal of all, which gives us the *surety* that "all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well," as Juliana of Norwich assures us. And the more one laughs with this kind of laughter (of sheer joy), the more one can say "all *is* well — even now"! For "God is in his heaven," which is in my heart, and so "all *is* well with the world." Thus *chit* or consciousness of Joy Herself (the Holy Spirit) ever dwelling in my heart, makes my very presence apostolic. Just being is enough, doing is unessential — unless the doing springs from this joyous Fountain of Living Waters that is Being (*Sat*) and Consciousness (*Chit*). This Triune God, Saccidananda, is Laughter, and His lovers and friends hear the laughter and spread it wherever they go.

Do you know the story of the "Three Laughing Monks of China"? They were known by no other name, no one knew their names. This is how the story goes. They did only one thing — they would enter a village market place and start laughing with their whole being Suddenly crowds would gather round them and also begin to laugh heartily. Others would join, get the infection and the joyous laughter would spread through the town Then they would move into other towns of China. This was their wordless way of preaching without laughing at any one — the Cosmic Joke. It was their only message and sermon. The day came when one of the three monks died. People were wondering and waited expectantly to see if now at least the others might weep But no the two stood near the corpse of the third and laughed hard — a belly laugh. The crowds begged· "At least speak now and explain this to us " So they spoke for the first time. "We always wondered which of us would die first We are laughing because he has died first We are laughing at his victory and our defeat Then too, all our long years together we laughed and enjoyed each other's presence There can be no other way to give him his last send-off. We can only laugh "

The villagers were sad but when the corpse was put on the funeral pyre, they realised that even the third one was laughing. It was conventional to wash the dead body and change his clothes But this man had told his friends "Don't change my dress and don't bathe my body, because I have never been unclean. So

much laughter in my life has left no chance of any impurity being accumulated near me. I have not gathered any dust! Laughter is always young and fresh, so don't give me a bath and don't change my clothes." When the body was put on the fire, suddenly they realised that he had hidden many things under his clothes, and those things started — Chinese fireworks! So the whole village laughed, and the two monks said: "You rascal! You have died but again you have defeated us. Yours is the last laugh!"

To be thus able to laugh through life and in death is undoubtedly to be truly Yogic, i.e., to be one with Him and sure of His dwelling with us always. Laughter can and should become part of our *sadhana*. Did not St Teresa of Avila say: "A sad saint is a sorry saint"? So let us laugh, for we are meant to be happy, here and now, and not only in the next life. And the whole world will laugh with us. Is there anything our weary world needs more today? And lest you forget, keep a picture of the Laughing Christ in your home, not only the Crucifix. For the death of Jesus was not the end of the story. And if you are an artist, paint more pictures of the Lord of the Dance as he leaps out of his tomb — like the painting of Jyoti Sahi. It will spread good art (badly needed in Catholic India), good theology, and good apostolic work. Laugh heartily — 'with the heart', i.e., lovingly — laugh loud, laugh long!

Amen! Alleluia! Om Shanti! Om Ananda!

VJTR 58 (1994) 500-503

Listen to the Spirit

Basic Education for All

International Day of Literacy — September 8th

On November 20th, 1989, the "International Convention on the Rights of the Child" was adopted by the UNO The Preamble asserts the inalienable dignity of the child as the basis of these rights which then are spelled out in fifty-four articles covering a wide range beginning with the right to a name, to survival, to education and protection against exploitation All children enjoy these rights till the age of 18 (unless another age is fixed for adulthood in any country), irrespective of religion, race or sex. On the day when the Convention was passed in New York a boy gave the message by telephone to Geneva, the historic centre, where 166 torches were lit representing the nations linked in the UNO, and a jubilation festival was celebrated by the children all over the city In the following year, 1990, in an international meeting of the cultural bodies of the UNO with the World Bank in Jomtien (Thailand), "Basic Education for All" was declared possible The funds for achieving this goal were to be more than doubled by 2000 The dream of universal education, which had been growing during this century, was translated into actual planning Already Toynbee had been fascinated by this vision "Our age is the first generation since the dawn of history in which mankind dared to believe it practical to make the benefits of civilization available to the whole human race "[1]

We are aware of the bleak background of these resolutions statistics tell us of the 700 million people in our world who are illiterate In India 30 million children are working Child labour is not only crippling the mind and body of the child but, economists warn us, it has disastrous effects on the development of the entire nation in its economic growth Too little is done for primary education In terms of national planning, primary education is a long-term investment with little immediate reward Our politicians look for early results While in the early educational budgets 56% of the available funds were allotted to primary education, in the 6th plan the share was reduced to 36%, while the share of university education rose from 9% to 16% Besides, it is well known how much of our primary education is ineffective, at times merely nominal, as no proper buildings are available and teachers are often unconcerned about the needs of the children

[1]Most of the data contained on these pages are taken from Angelo FERNANDES, *Building Bridges, The Missing Dimension of Education* Anand Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1993

From early times Christians were concerned with education. Monasteries became centres of culture and learning. In the early Middle Ages the Church held a quasi-monopoly in education — even today our vocabulary keeps the same basic word for clerk (one who does the reading and writing) and cleric (one who is engaged in Church affairs).

In our modern society education has become the concern for all who work for the welfare of the nation, specially the Government. The role of the Church is subsidiary. Yet even today her contribution is vital not only in filling up gaps where other agencies fail but mostly in the motivation and orientation of the educational work. Its importance, mostly in developing countries, is spelled out in the Mission Decree of Vatican II.

> With special care let (the faithful) devote themselves to the education of children and young people by means of different kinds of schools. These schools should be considered not only as an outstanding means of forming and developing Christian youth but also as a service of supreme value to people, especially in the developing nations, a service elevating the level of human dignity and preparing the way for living conditions which are more humane (AG 12)

The Church's responsibility for the Christian education and faith-formation of her own children is obvious. It is not the topic of these pages

But, according to the Council, the scope of our schools is much wider. The educational work of the Church, particularly in our country, reaches out to all sections of society Our schools are an important, perhaps the most important contribution of Christians to the development of the country To make their work more fruitful the goals of Christian education must be clearly defined what do we mean by basic education? It surely must offer the elementary tools for life in a modern society — reading and writing Illiterate people are at the mercy of many forms of exploitation and fraud But these basic skills are only a first step towards a much wider scope, the development of the whole person. Each citizen is called to share in the cultural life of the nation and to make a constructive contribution to society.

The wider scope has been recognized at the international level. After the acceptance of the convention on the rights of the child and the demand for the basic education of all, the UNICEF asked the "World Conference on Religion and Peace" to arrange a spiritual summit on "The World's Religions for the World's Children." It was convened in Princeton (New Jersey) in July 1990. Over the past decades it had become clear that peace and progress of the human family cannot be achieved by science and technology only A new generation must grow up in an atmosphere of peace and solidarity, of social concern and responsibility. The dignity of the human person must unfold through

education. A climate of harmonious relationship to the neighbour and to all must develop

This obviously is the sphere in which Christian education has to make its impact in the modern world and particularly in our country. In the fulfillment of this task we first think of the many educational institutions spread over the country Particularly after independence they have increased enormously the number of high schools has grown six times, that of colleges eight times during the last fifty years The Mission Consultation held in Pune in January this year pays tribute to them as "an expression of our commitment to truth, love, justice and service." But it also expresses concern Christian institutions fulfil their task only if they are "characterized by a spirit of love, compassion, service, justice, honesty, respect and courtesy , respond sensitively to the cultural and religious heritage of our land and are specially alert to the needs of the poor, generously putting at their disposal whatever facilities they can" (*Concluding Statement* n 63)

An institution can be called truly Christian only if it gives witness to Jesus Christ and in its life and work communicates the message of God's reign This must be done in a spirit totally free from confessional exclusiveness, in the way in which Jesus himself proclaimed the message of God's love for all He wanted all people to be united in a community of love The witness to God's love is urgently needed in the increasingly secular atmosphere of our society our thinking has lost its wings, it moves only on the ground level of the empirical world, and the "beyond" is blotted out Practical life, too, seems totally absorbed in the struggle for survival, each one is busy in building up his small world with a bit of comfort and security, calculating his chances and risks God seems to have no place in this world Still, he is not simply absent Even today religion pervades most spheres of life, though devotions often cling to silly superstitions and celebrations may be reduced to rituals

It is not the peculiarity of Christian education that it contains a religious dimension — this is found in hundred forms all around But in Christian education faith in God is integrated into actual life God's reign proclaimed by Jesus does not consist in the vague consciousness of a Supreme Reality but in the awareness of the creative and life-giving presence of God The wonders of nature are for Jesus transparent to God, the beauty of a flower is for him the tender gift of his Father who clothes them God is at work most in human life in every situation Jesus knows that his Father is with him Thus Christian education should give to every child, irrespective of denomination, the consciousness of the living and loving God and of God's powerfully supporting and transforming presence in the depth of our heart and in the world

God's reign is not apart from our world but transforms it. Therefore basic education cannot be limited to the elementary tools of read-

ing and writing It includes all vital spheres of life: proper nutrition, hygiene, sanitary care of the surroundings, practical skills of self-support It is concerned also with the personal life of the child, building up a healthy self-image, emotional balance and stability, readiness to face problems and tensions.

Not only children are in need of basic education. Many people, for generations subject to poverty and social dependence, are unable to break out of the oppressive structures and traditions which block their access to a fuller life. Therefore "basic education for all" does not stop at the age of 18 but is the need of the entire human family in all stages of life. in a great variety of social patterns and economic conditions. A Christian view of education must not be fettered by abstract plans, in a holistic approach it is concerned with the actual needs of the people. Many of our parishes and mission stations have long ago embarked on schemes of adult education, mostly for women, with the desire to create more humane living conditions so that people can live in human dignity

It would be futile to expect all these needs to be taken care of by the Government. In the spirit of the international convention, "education for all" must become the concern of the entire nation, of the world. A sense of common responsibility must link all educational structures Each school should be aware of being part of a national network of education in which all are involved administrators, teachers and students Social responsibility and a comprehensive vision are part of a Christian approach to education Archbishop A Fernandes asks for a shift of focus from the single school to "children in the school and neighbourhood "[2]

Pioneering and inspiring models have been realized in various places Perhaps the best known example is the Loreto Girls' School of Sealdah (Calcutta) where the students reach out to village schools of the surroundings in weekly trips, and where they daily care for street children who can drop in only at irregular times and, in small groups, get tuition from the children of the school. Many people concerned with basic education, seminar groups, etc , come to visit the place and find inspiration there

The Spirit speaks in the signs of the time, in the actual needs of people, and is at work in the movement "education for all " This secular phenomenon is an invitation to Christians, particularly in our country, to open our hearts to those in need, outgrowing institutional planning and communal interests.

J. NEUNER, S.J.

[2] *Loc cit.*, p 64

VJTR 58 (1994) 504-506

Document

Charter for the Ministry and Life of the Diocesan Priests in India

Prepared by the Catholic Priests' Conference of India (CPCI)

Introduction

The Second Vatican Council says that "the joy and the hope, the griefs and the anxieties of people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ" (GS 1) In keeping with this spirit, the members of CPCI, as diocesan priests, have been reflecting on their ministry and life in the context of the Indian realities marked by rich cultural and religious traditions on the one hand and stark poverty and oppression on the other Realizing that the Church has to take sides with the poor in view of being an effective sign and instrument of God's good news to the poor (Lk 4 18-19), we have chosen to give a liberative thrust to our ministry and life

It is against this backdrop we make the following proposals to our Church leaders, Christians and all people of good will so that we may creatively respond to the contemporary reality Through these proposals we would like to enter into a creative dialogue with all concerned in order to transform the Church structures to be at the service of the people of God and the society at large

I. Ministry of Diocesan Priests

We do appreciate the traditional ministries of the diocesan priests in the Indian Church But we experience a felt and urgent need to go beyond them to creatively and effectively respond to the stark realities of our poor people, in keeping with the teachings of the Church

"It is up to the Christian communities to analyse with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words and to draw principles of reflection, norms and judgment and directives for action from the social teachings of the Church It is up to the Christian communities, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in communion with the bishops who hold responsibility and in dialogue with other Christian brethren and all men of good will, to discern the options and commitments which are called for in order to bring about the social, political and economic changes seen in many cases to be urgently needed" (PAUL VI, *Oct Adv*, 4).

1. Taking into account the signs of the times (GS 4) and the personal charisma of diocesan priests, we want the Church to be open to new forms of ministry going beyond the traditional ones which are mostly confined to the parish and diocesan set-up.
2 Priests who take initiatives for new and meaningful forms of ministry should be understood and encouraged. As instances, we mention team ministry, and going beyond the predominantly cultic to prophetic ministry, "affecting and upsetting through the power of the Gospel, humankind's criteria for judgment" (PAUL VI, *Evan Nunt.*, 19).
3 To achieve the above aim, the right of the diocesan priests to freely join associations like the CPCI is to be respected and positively encouraged in keeping with CIC, c. 278. "Secular clerics have the right to associate with others for the purpose of pursuing ends which befit the clerical state" (*Codex juris Canonici* [CIC] c. 278, see also *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* [CCEO] c 391)
4 The participatory role of the laity in co-operative ministry is to be seriously taken and in view of this Pastoral Councils and Financial Committees have to be formed in every ecclesial unit.
5 To promote dialogue and collaboration with people of other faiths and ideologies which are indispensable to promote God's Kingdom in India, special efforts have to be made to join secular movements and build human communities

II. On-going Formation

"Clerics are to continue their sacred studies even after ordination to the priesthood . Priests are to attend pastoral courses to be arranged for them They are to seek knowledge of other sciences, especially those linked to the sacred sciences, particularly insofar as they benefit the exercise of the pastoral ministry" (CIC, 279, see CCEO, c 372/2 — these canons are formulated on the basis of several Church documents of Vatican II — CD 16, OT 22, PO 19)
6 In keeping with the spirit of Canon 279, we expect each diocese, with the help of the Diocesan Clergy Commission or Priests' Council, to organise a systematic ongoing formation to update priests in theology, spirituality, pastoral methods and apostolic praxis This could be done either within the diocese or in collaboration with National Institutes like NBCLC, NVSC, St. John's Medical College, etc , and other regional seminaries and institutes
7 All priests should be obliged, as it is done for annual retreats, to undergo certain basic courses periodically.
8. To facilitate participation of priests in these courses, the diocese itself should undertake to provide substitutes
9 We also propose that the diocesan priests have the facility to do higher studies and to specialise in areas related to their ministry to God's people, and other personal interests (see CIC, c 819 "In so far as the good of the diocese or religious institute or indeed even of the

universal Church requires it, young persons, clerics and members of institutes, outstanding in character, intelligence and virtue, must be sent to ecclesiastical universities or faculties by the diocesan Bishops or the Superiors of their Institutes")

10. The selection should be based on rationally worked-out objective criteria.

11. A personnel board should be established in every diocese for better personnel management, appointments and to provide facilities for specialization, etc.

12. The rich experience of diocesan priests especially those with pioneering experience in pastoral ministry, is to be utilized at different stages in the formation of seminarians

13. Lay participation in seminary formation is essential

III. Transfer Policy and Term of Office

14. Every diocese should have a well-articulated transfer policy. The personnel board can facilitate transfers taking into account the needs of the people, the aptitudes of the priests and their ministry satisfaction ("job satisfaction")

15. For all services, especially those of Vicar-General, Procurator, members of the Curia, Parish Priests, a term of office needs to be fixed. A term of five to seven years may be a good average

16 In India, for a Bishop, the term of office could be 15 years in a diocese and a change in ministry at the age of 65

IV. Decentralization of Power for Greater Co-responsibility

17 Participatory and democratic methods should be introduced in choosing persons for important services like the Vicar-General, Vicar Forane, Secretaries of Commissions, etc It is heartening to hear that such a model is already followed in some dioceses in our country

18 It is highly desirable that the Bishop be elected in a similar manner, wherever it is feasible (Here it may be good to remember a Roman maxim *Quod omnes tangit ab omnibus tractari et approbari debet*· "What concerns all should be dealt with and approved by all " This maxim is invoked by Popes Innocent III and Boniface VIII to bring about active participation in the Church The maxim was made part of the Decretals, *Regula 29*)

19 As we have structures like Council of Priests and Pastoral Councils in every diocese, similar elected bodies have to be created at the regional and national levels to interact with the Conferences of Bishops.

V. Holidays to be Facilitated

Rest, relaxation and holidays are essential part of the rhythm of life Any disequilibrium in this regard will affect life and service. Therefore,

20. In keeping with the CIC cc. 283/2; 533/2-3; 530/3, and CCEO, cc. 386/2, 392, holidays for priests should be facilitated and better organised. Every priest has a right to one month holiday every year and a sabbatical year after every six years. Priests should be enabled to take these holidays.

21. As CIC, c. 533/3 says, "It is for the diocesan bishop to establish norms by which, during the parish priest's absence, the care of the parish is provided for by a priest with the requisite faculties."

VI. Care of Priests

23 We demand that the priests who are sick, old, retired, or in some particular difficulties should be specially cared for (see CIC, cc. 281; 538/3, CCEO, c 390)

24 "In imposing penalties on a cleric, care must always be taken that he does not lack what is necessary for his worthy support" (CIC, c 1350) "The Ordinary is to provide in the best way possible" for any suspended priests

25 Priests who have been for some reason or other deprived of any office should be properly maintained, which is a matter of natural justice, and much more of Christian justice

26 It is high time that the Clergy Commission undertakes a comprehensive survey regarding these matters and does the needful to set things right wherever necessary

VII. Conciliation Forum

Looking at Jesus' ministry, one sees that his entire life was full of conflicts because of his option for the poor. His solidarity with the poor brought him into direct conflict with the rich (see the five controversies in Mk 2 1-3 6)

27 When priests start following Jesus' stand in their ministry, conflicts may arise between them and the bishops, the priests themselves and priests and people A conciliation forum should be created to resolve such conflicts We are very happy to know that the Standing Committee of the CBCI has already begun to work for reconciliation bodies to resolve conflicts between bishops, priests and lay people. We hope that they will soon come into effect

28 In keeping with the spirit of Canon Law (see CIC, c. 1321. Commentary· "However, Church law should be no less a guardian of freedom, justice, and equity than civil law and a corollary of this guardianship function is a presumption of purity of intent even on the part of alleged law-breakers" — *The Code of Canon Law A Text and Commentary*, ed. by J.A Coriden, T.J Green and D.E. Heintschel, TPI, Bangalore, 1986, p 901) arbitrary disciplinary action is to be avoided. Proper enquiry and canonical procedures are to be followed.

VIII. For Effective Administration

29. The present Clergy Commission of the CBCI should immediately undertake a detailed survey of the ministry, living and working conditions of the secular clergy and initiate action so that whatever is wanting in any diocese may be set right within a stipulated time

30. We propose that an all-India body endowed with sufficient powers be constituted to monitor all these This body should have sufficient members elected from among the diocesan clergy. The present Clergy Commission could itself play this role provided its scope and membership is enlarged and reworked In this Commission at present religious and clergy are clubbed together There must be a Commission meant only for diocesan clergy Similar bodies should be established at the regional and diocesan levels

Conclusion

The above proposals are made so that the diocesan priests may be helped to work more effectively towards the emergence of a Church which is truly the embodiment of the values of the Kingdom and can be a source of inspiration to one and all committed to the formation of a new society in India — a society that is just, free and fraternal (see Rev 21 1-6)

VJTR 58 (1994) 508-511

Note

Ambedkar's Theological Significance

1 *Ambedkar's Life Project is a Theological Project*

Theology is understood here as the systematic reflection on the liberating and humanizing actions done by and on behalf of the oppressed, which becomes the mediation as well as the sacrament of God's saving actions in history

Ambedkar was fully committed to the humanization and liberation of the Dalits, the most oppressed people of this country He had no use for the abstract, metaphysical religions like the Vedanta, or the religions of ritual rules and bloody sacrifices

His concern was not what would happen to the soul after death, but what happens to the human persons in this life He wanted the Dalits to have not only their bread and butter but also to have their human dignity and honour as anybody else He made the liberty, equality, and fraternity of his people the centre of his life's concern He placed everything else, the nation, religions, etc, after his people

Ambedkar was ready to stake all his energy and resources for this cause and make it a life-long commitment As such his life's project became one with God's own project, who wants all his children to

have life, life in all its abundance.

Therefore, though Ambedkar has not spoken about theology or eulogised over God, his life and mission, his word and deed, have a theological significance as a *theanthropic praxis*.

In our days, if any theologising endeavour forgets Ambedkar's concerns and agenda, that theology stands discredited.

2. From Ambedkar We Learn the Right Perspective for Doing Theology

The so-called neutral socio-political perspective is of no use for doing theology In reality it does not exist.

Ambedkar's life-long struggles with the ruling castes and ruling class of India amply show that the elite perspective is in conflict with the Dalit perspective

The elite perspective justifies the *status quo*

— leads to exploitation and oppression

— longs for one-up-manship

The Dalit perspective questions the *status quo*

— wants to subvert it

— longs for more life, equality, freedom, fellowship, dignity and honour in a new society

To do theology in India today implies an imperative that we take up the Dalit perspective and reject the elite perspective

3 Ambedkar Provides a Paradigm for Assessing the Signs of the Times

In Ambedkar and the struggle of his people we encounter a superhuman power at work

— Against all odds they cling on to life

— Against all obstacles they forge ahead to declare their freedom and establish their just rights

— Against all oppositions they destroy the oppressive structures and create a new humanity and a new history

In this way they are breaking into the world with an unbelievable power and force Theologians call it the irruption of the poor

This irruption of the poor happens today and it is at the same time the irruption of God into history, to establish his Reign of Righteousness

Thus in Ambedkar we see a paradigm to interpret the greatest signs of the times, the irruption of the poor and the oppressed into history, especially the history of the Dalits.

It is needless to say that no theology could be done today ignoring these signs of our times — the irruption of the poor· the Dalits, Tribals, the Women, etc.

Seen from the Biblical faith, the poor are today's suffering servants, today's crucified peoples. Their suffering sheds light on the evil

and injustices prevalent today and condemns them. Their struggles for full human life announce the hope of a new world, the redeemed humanity.

4. Ambedkar Teaches that the Preferential Option for the Poor is a sine qua non Condition for Doing Theology.

— Because their perspective alone is capable of leading to true humanization,
— because God is irrupting in to the world in and through their struggles,
— because they are today's suffering servant and crucified people for the sake of the total human liberation,

a preferential option for the poor is indispensable for doing theology

It is called preferential option because it is not an exclusivistic option. The universal humanization is possible only through the particular humanization, where humanity is most disfigured and disgraced

From this perspective, the phrase "preferential option for the poor" is obviously very weak Option implies choice But what we have here is not an option but an obligation a principle of *obligatory solidarity* with the poor That this principle is a primary requirement for doing theology is sufficiently stressed by the theological significance of Dr Ambedkar's life This principle also shows that while the *option for the poor* is an obligation, an agreement with the *options of the poor* is a necessity in the task of doing theology today

5. In Ambedkar We Learn that the Poor are the Real Subjects of Theologising

Ambedkar is not read merely as a material for theology, i e, as an object of theology

In Ambedkar we realize that only those who have the courage to join God in his historical task of humanizing the universe have a right to theologise, i e, to become subjects of theologising The poor and the oppressed who have decided to struggle for their liberation, and by that for the liberation of all, are the ones who can eminently become the true subjects to do theology The professional theologians can only play the role of midwives provided they have a perspective and a commitment like that of Ambedkar

As subjects of a new creation, the poor bring new hope into the world, new courage into history and new harvests into human community.

As subjects of a new theology they say, in the words of Hollenbach, that

— the needs of the poor take priority over the wants of the rich
— the participation of the marginalized takes priority over the status quo which excludes them

Only when the agenda of the poor and oppressed, as subjects of a new human history, are taken as the agenda for doing theology, theology will truly be liberating.

6. Ambedkar Provides a Critique for Judging Indian Theologies

In India the Dalits, the Tribals, etc., become the authentic subjects of theology with their dreams and longings for an egalitarian, just and loving society.

Therefore their history, their oppression, their struggles, their sacrifices and success should be deeply probed into in doing theology. Their songs, stories, rituals and festivals should become important *resources* for theology.

Forgetting the little traditions of the Dalits and Tribals, and concentrating only on the sources of the great tradition, the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Epics, etc., i.e., the *Shrutis* and *Smritis*, will not lead to an authentic, liberating, Indian Christian Theology.

From the subaltern perspective such a theology which is founded on the values of *chaturvarnya*, that is, on the values of graded inequality, will have to be differently named. Ambedkar would not hesitate to call it *Demonology* or *Diabology*!

Judged by this criteria, much of the past attempts at theological inculturation in India would stand condemned, for leaning heavily on the Brahminical tradition.

7. Spirituality of Ambedkar

To conclude let me point out a few important elements of the spirituality of Ambedkar:

- a socio-historic contemplation of the human reality using rational and scientific tools
- a prophetic solidarity with the oppressed and a revolutionary commitment to their empowerment
- a secular humanist approach to the religiously pluralistic situation of India
- an authentic human life of responsibility guided by some noble principles based on the intrinsic values of the human reality rather than controlled by some impersonal laws, however sacred they might appear to be.

P. AROCKIADOSS, S.J.[1]

[1]The above is a summary of a Doctoral Thesis by the author presented at the Faculty of Vidyajyoti in March 1994. The thesis goes into other relevant areas of Ambedkar's thought specially in respect to a theology of Religions and Dialogue, a theology of and for Minorities, a theology of Power and Politics.

VJTR 59 (1994) 512-529

Review Article

Some Glimpses of Christology

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

We begin with a book for everyone[1] There are many recent studies which attempt to draw a picture of Jesus of Nazareth. Among the more notable I would number Nolan's *Jesus Before Christianity*, Borg's *Jesus A New Vision*, and Verme's *Jesus the Jew* Senior's study does not explicitly use socio-cultural studies of Jesus' world, yet he does lead readers beyond the Gospel picture to Jesus of Nazareth, with careful attention to the progressive movement from the Gospels back to Jesus. There is a gentleness in his book that contrasts with to the shock treatment of Nolan and Borg Christian readers are educated how to discover Jesus of Nazareth Senior initially describes the nature of the Gospels and their formation and Jesus' world (the land, politics, religion, culture, economy) To gradually draw a picture of Jesus himself, he studies his disciples, his teaching (with a particular emphasis on Jesus' experience of God as Father and the love commandment), his works of power, his death and his victory and the community which arose to continue his mission

Written attractively with a sense of wonder before this great person, the book deserves careful reading by those who have not been exposed to much critical study of the Gospels. It is based on fine contemporary scholarship, is non-technical in style and has good insights The figure of Jesus gradually emerges, though not as sharply drawn as in other modern studies of Jesus. Senior is careful not to draw out from the sources (the Gospels) more than they allow and leaves room for an interplay between Jesus of Nazareth and the Jesus Christ of the Gospels A good book for those beginning a serious study

We put together here a number of books which approach this central issue of modern theology from various perspectives and backgrounds. A demanding study for serious students of Christology is Helminiak's[2] Not many readers will be able to get this book which made an otherwise long and tideous train journey quite memorable Some readers will put the book aside as the author eschews easy options and attempts to formulate a Christology which responds to both the demands of continuity with tradition and the challenges of modern needs He persistently challenges the basic weaknesses of the prevalent

---

[1] Donald SENIOR, **Jesus. A Gospel Portrait** (Revised and Expanded Edition) Mahwah Paulist Press, 1992 Pp iii-161 $ 9 95 ISBN 0-8091-3338-5.

[2] Daniel A. HELMINIAK, **The Same Jesus A Contemporary Christology**. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1986 Pp xxiii-337 $ 15 95 ISBN 0-8294-0521-6.

relativism and agnosticism, the deadness of a repetition of traditional dogmatism and the pious unreflected "heretical" options which swing between Jesus-God and Jesus-man.

At the centre of the book is an appeal for epistemological clarity and an insistence on the centrality of the epistemological question. Can the human person know reality in a human way combining a realistic interplay of the subjective and the objective? In my own mind many recent attempts to re-interpret the biblical data and traditional Christological formulations in response to the pressing problems of our modern world — like the outrageous injustice which dehumanizes a large proportion of the human family, the place of woman in the Church, the rich pluralism of God's self-revelation in the great living religions, the immobility of so much of traditional Christianity which upholds the established society and individual piety — are marred by a lack of clarity about and an unwillingness to face epistemological problems and questions.

Helminiak makes a number of useful distinctions. He describes the popular distinctions of Christology "From Above" (traditional and represented by John and the Councils and most Christology up to the 1940s/50s) and "From Below" (represented by more recent theologies with more emphasis on the Synoptics). "From Above" Christologies have difficulty with the significance of Jesus' human life while "From Below" approaches have to appeal to "From Above" approaches to affirm the divinity of Jesus and give adequate importance to his life, death and resurrection In the more radical "From Below" approaches Jesus ultimately becomes the acme of all human possibilities and in this sense "divine "

A more important distinction is between Kerygmatic and Systematic Christologies They differ in their goal, manner of articulation and the type of truth they mediate Kerymatic Christologies ultimately wish to be emotive and inspirational They use poetic, symbolic or narrative expression and mediate reality with evocative power and without a type of precision and exactness They respond to the question "Who is Christ for me/us?" All the NT is Kerygmatic as are many forms of contemporary Christological thinking. Both "From Above" and "From Below" approaches based on narrative (story form) are Kerygmatic/Functional Systematic Christologies respond to definite questions about Jesus Christ, attempting to say who Jesus Christ himself is, using ontological language marked by clarity, precision and abstraction, and intend to bring greater understanding within a systematic structure. They answer the question "Who is Jesus himself?" The author argues that both approaches are necessary, complement each other and have distinct and dependent roles and epistemological bases. If the systematic (ontological) approach is either excluded or devalued this leads to relativism, agnosticism or other soft options. The systematic approach is in danger of being an unintelligible, static repetition of tradition

unless attempts are made at re-interpretation and re-articulation. It will never be popular nor easily intelligible as it must use technical language for precision, clarity and incorporation into a system which explains other aspects of the Christian faith. These two approaches are also described as Functional and Ontological.

The work is divided into three interrelated parts. I. The Contemporary Situation; II Retrieving the Tradition, and III. A Contemporary Christology. The first part treats of the points discussed above and offers a survey of the historical critical method in the NT, especially the Gospels. The chapter on epistemological theory and its application to Christology and so faith-knowledge deserves to be read, as I believe that many problems in contemporary theology are not theological but epistemological, even in theologies which pride themselves on fidelity to tradition A theology which is unintelligible is as poor as a theology which inspires but remains ambiguously vague

The second part surveys the theologies in the NT, mainly the Gospels. I found too little attention was given to Paul, Acts, the later NT writings, including Revelation and Hebrews The section on the historical Jesus and his self-awareness is weak because little account is taken of his socio-cultural and religious world The stimulating book of Borg, for example, would enrich this section

The two chapters on the Councils (Nicea to Chaceldon, pp. 97-151) are difficult as the author traces carefully the series of precise problems and the systematic answers, clarifying the terminology and epistemology being used and their validity Many students would profit from these chapters, though they are demanding, technical and dry.

The whole movement of the book is towards Helminiak's presentation of a Christology, contemporary, faithful to the basic biblical sources and the centuries of struggle to articulate ontologically who Jesus is and what he has done for human history

The book is written as a text book The author carefully spells out his intentions step by step, summarizes chapters and reviews the argument of each part, interrelating the steps taken and the methodology used There is adequate repetition and pedagogical care for clarity. The author's presuppositions, criticism and own theological positions are spelt out and well argued

I was uncomfortable with the unqualified use of "God" for Jesus Christ throughout the book. I would use "divine" and "Son of God" in many places and think the use of "God" is confusing at places. The author is aware of contemporary biblical studies and methods (not narrative criticism of the Gospels) though his forte is systematic exposition. He gives due importance to both the Kerygmatic and the Systematic (Functional/Ontological) approaches and sees equal value and definite weakness in the "From Above/Below" perspectives. He emphasizes the lack of appreciation for and understanding of systematic Christology and its need, because in his estimation this is the point of

crisis. The basic reason for the crisis is epistemological. Though the author does not discuss in detail various recent Christologies nor the different socio-cultural and religious contexts, yet the book has a definite contribution to make because of the clear and forthright challenge of clarity and intelligibility as against vagueness and relativism.

One fundamental aspect in any study of Jesus Christ is Jesus as saviour (Soteriology) However to explain to others how Jesus is saviour and in what salvation consists often leaves adult Christians silent after a few brief sentences. Sloyan has written a short study in which he attempts to help adult Christians understand how Jesus is saviour and explicitly how over centuries the biblical witness, the Fathers and the theologians of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions have explained the doctrine of salvation.[3]

The opening sentence of the book is significant. "Anyone who reads the Gospels with care comes to realize that they are not only centered on the life and teaching of Jesus but are more concerned *with what* he accomplished than with who *he was*" (p 11 emphasis added). However much of the theological effort has been to define the "who" rather than the "what."

In the opening chapter Sloyan traces briefly the journey to the definition of the "Who" of Jesus in the biblical writings and early Christian history up to Chalcedon With wise comments and clarifications, he remarks that God/divine and man/human are not equal components when describing Jesus He indicates what happens when "popular monophysitism" is challenged by the real humanity of Jesus. He insists on the "denial" aspect of conciliar definitions as they struggle to express the inexpressible

In the next chapter the author reminds us of the strangeness of the question about redemption for Jew and Muslim, and the differences within the Christian churches The point of the chapter is to describe the teaching of the Gospels, Paul and other writers about what Jesus did The question Sloyan seeks to answer, which is also the title to the chapter, is "Where did Jesus' Followers Get the Idea They Needed to be Redeemed?" The priority of the resurrection is underlined In the Gospels the Reign of God, Covenant (new) and Redemption (ransom) and the apocalyptic New Age provide the matrix for the hopes and the descriptions of the purpose of Jesus' life, the healings intimating the nearness of the Kingdom promised by God. Paul is judged to be the most significant thinker

I found the section on Paul to be excellent both in the account of his theology, its starting point (God in Jesus Christ's death-Resurrection, the New Age.), the description of the multi-dimensions of his thought (universal in scope, where the evil is Sin-Death) and the cri-

[3]Gerard S Sloyan, **Jesus: Redeemer and Divine Word.** Collegeville: Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press, 1989. Pp 160. $ 10 95 ISBN 0-089453-5 794-X.

tique of the impaired presentations of Paul (overemphasis upon expiation, sacrifice, sins, the individual, works of law...).

I shall quote his summary at length:

What, then, did the man teach that is the Church's largely disregarded treasure? He taught an intensely personal relation between God and Israel which was perceived as extended in Jesus' day to include the rest of the human race Faith was the free human response to God's tender concern. The concern came first, however, not the response. God's deliverance from the human predicament came in the form of a human being who was uniquely God's son. How humanity, whether Jewish or gentile, would perceive its predicament was altered radically by the solution to it God held out in a human The biblical authors had much to say about sin and death and divine deliverance, the pagan philosophers about ignorance and error, and knowledge as the key to immortality Paul received the newly conceived tradition of Christ's death as the totally adequate sacrifice for past transgressions and handed it on Whether he perceived a weakness in the imagery of the temple for his gentiles who had never experienced pilgrimage to Jerusalem, we cannot say We do know that without repudiating Christ's death as a fulfillment of blood sacrifice he identified another, higher purpose for it It was to achieve the transfer of a whole race of believers from the eon of death and sin to that of life and reconciliation, from the dominion of the "god of this age" who blinds, to the Lordship of Christ, "the likeness of God" (2 Corinthians 4 4) (p 55)

The later NT writers are read in the light of the breadth and depth of Paul's thought

Sloyan then moves on to the Patristic Era (ch 3) and *The Medieval Debate and the Watershed the Reformation Constituted* (ch 4). In the East the effects of salvation, God's work in Christ, were interpreted as immortality, the gift of humanity, the disclosure of authentic humanity, purification, and above all as deification Each aspect of Jesus Christ's life was assigned special effect his life — the revelation of truth, his passion and death — forgiveness of sins and justification, his resurrection — immortality and deification, the climax of at-one-ment of God and sinful humanity

Apart from the controversy about the inevitability of sin versus freedom and the necessity of God's grace, the medieval debate in many ways centred around Anselm's *Why God became Man* and his theology of satisfaction and attempts to bring together the person and the work of Christ Sloyan summarises Anselm's thought, aspects of which would later be isolated and distorted (retribution and necessity). He writes:

Careful scrutiny reveals that the Anselmian argument is about one thing That is that God, being God, can only act in God's way. Having decided to create us as free creatures out of love, God has

> to pursue us with this love no matter how we act. Once we chose to disobey and act sinfully — an almost incredible act of confidence in our freedom on God's part — the only path that God could follow was one of love for us in these tragic circumstances. The sole restraint imposed — if that is the correct term — is that God cannot act un-Godlike. Deserting the divine justice, necessity, call it what you will, would constitute such impossibility. Hence, there was the "need" to act as God did, becoming man and dying to show the extent of the love God bears us (p 105).

The death of Jesus on the Cross was also central at this period and hence followed the Passion piety, and individual asceticism, with the neglect of social transformation, but produced great charitable works.

The major question at the time of the Reformation was how we personally appropriated redemption Hence we have the following disputes· the faith-works controversy, the effects of Adam's sin; total depravity against a badly injured humanity, imputed or real justification; and the predestined redemption of all the elect The centrality of Jesus' death and the Chalcedon dogma mere accepted Most theologies of redemption accepted some form of satisfaction with the extremes of substitution/debt payment and the conflict between God's justice and mercy, his anger, retribution, the necessity of Jesus' death The dimension of communitarian salvation of the East was submerged in the dominant concern for individual salvation Christ's work was focused on sins and original sin, which was not always thought to be transmitted *by* conception but rather *at* conception, as in Trent

We would note in Catholic and Protestant theology a lack of concern and meaning for the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit, the social or this-worldly effects and purpose of redemption, the cosmic dimension of Christ's death and resurrection, the New Age

The major differences have been mentioned The summaries of the Catholic and Protestant theologies of redemption are worth reading because these theologies are basically the theologies ordinary Christians live by today (see pp 130-138) A new element in all the major churches has been to see the present social dimension and responsibilities of Christians in the face of massive injustice, poverty and oppression and relate this to the purpose of Jesus Christ's mission

Sloyan completes his survey with a final section, *A Usable Theology of Salvation for Our Day* He ranges over major aspects of the theology of creation, grace, sin, redemption and sanctification, God's immense and eternal mercy and love, Jesus' life and obedience unto death, the Divine-human of Jesus Christ, the universal and cosmic transformation, salvation in Christ without any knowldge of Christ, freedom, faith, human responsibility He concludes:

> Our treatment of the mystery of salvation needs to stop here. It is a mystery, hence impenetrable to the human mind, yet capable of some rational exploration It is a supremely important mystery,

perhaps *the* Christian mystery. For, whereas minor follies have been uttered in the name of salvation in the Christian past, they are as nothing compared to those of the current age. Whole populations are once more being complacently consigned to hell; marriages and families are being shipwrecked in the name of the gospel; and God is being regularly reduced from the boundless love that is godhead to a tiny despot interested only in his friends. Christian faith is both too large and too largeminded to be replaced by this puny caricature Yet such perversion of the glorious reality "salvation" is happening globally among earnest cadres which preempt for themselves the rich self-denomination "Christian " This small book has been an attempt to describe the height and breadth and depth of the love of God expressed in Christ Jesus and in the Spirit which declares that humanity is no less than made like to God if it will respond humanly to this love Such is the unfathomable mystery of redemption

A fine study

Another good study is by Hultgren [4] This study on "redemptive Christology" by a Lutheran Professor of the NT and author of *Paul's Gospel and Mission* stresses that the central point of NT Christology is what Christ has brought about by his life, death and resurrection. In a sense the book is a commentary on Melanchton's famous statement of 1521 that "This is to knew Christ, to know his benefits," quoted at the beginning and the end of the book The book is effectively a study of NT soteriology in relation to Jesus Christ based on two pivot questions (1) How does the NT speak of "redemption" (in the broadest sense of this word), and (2) What benefits accrue to the world from Christ which would not be there without him? The study is in constant dialogue with most modern biblical scholarship, specially Protestant One of the few Catholic authors taken seriously and criticised is Schillebeeckx

In effect, before entering into the thesis of the book the second chapter rejects the position of Perrin, Schillebeeckx and Hengel that the oldest NT layer has a soteriology of the "Christ-elect" according to which the (second) coming of Christ alone will be the source of salvation, the cross being only a prelude to it This view is based on a particular interpretation of Acts 3 12-16, the "Maranatha" invocation and "Q" Hultgren analyses the reasons given and shows that the same data are open to a different interpretation

Hultgren then classifies the NT soteriologies into four types. 1 God himself has accomplished redemption in Christ crucified and risen, whose role is that of the obedient son. The justification of the human race is the result of Christ's act, and this is known through the Gospel

[4] Arland J. HULTGREN, Christ and His Benefits. Christology and Redemption in the New Testament. Philadelphia. Fortress Press, 1987 Pp xvi-285 $ 29 95 ISBN 0-8006-0861-5

and proleptically effective through faith. Paul and Mk represent this type. 2. God's redemptive purpose and promise is confirmed in the ministry, life, death, resurrection and reign of Christ. The promise-fulfilment pattern looks forward to a future and hence the redemptive power of the cross is not so stressed. The role of the Church is consequently more prominent. Mt and Lk (including Acts) stress this type of soteriology. 3. Christ who is preexistent comes to the rescue of humanity and wins redemption, of course because of God's initiative. But Christ is the central figure reconciling the world to himself and to God. Although the fruit of the third generation Christians, this theology is the most prevalent in the NT. Col, Eph, Pastorals, 1 Pet, Heb, Rev. 4. In the fourth type, represented by Jn and 1-3 Jn, Christ the Son, sent by God, mediates redemption. Salvation or eternal life consists exclusively in accepting the Son who reveals the Father. This is the most polemic and exclusivist Christology. The Gospel is indeed good news, but even more, it is a summons to believe in Christ, the Son of God, the life-giver

Hultgren calls the first two types theopractic and the third and fourth Christopractic Like the theocentric/Christocentric terminology, the distinction is confusing. all types affirm both the initiative of the Father and the role of the Son (Christ). There may be different stresses but all theologies are really theo-Christo-practic Even the affirmation of different emphasis depends much on the interpreter's own subjective assessment.

The last part of the book gives us the author's theological reflections He asks why different Christologies emerged. Their different contexts and situations (not so much geographic or temporal, because there is much overlapping) explain the variety to a certain extent. He finds, however, that the NT Christologies cannot be harmonised — they are incompatible They have surely common elements but in what they differ one must choose one stream even at the cost of ignoring or even denying other trends. He particularly focuses on the alleged contradiction between a universal salvation already achieved on the cross (cf. types 1 and 3) and the exclusivist salvation that depends on the faith of the believer (cf. 4 and 2). The Lutheran Professor finds the type 1 Christology the one most in consonant with the Scriptures (OT) and with the ministry of Jesus himself and, not surprisingly, he opts for Paul For Hultregen the good news is simply that redemption of the world has taken place in the cross and resurrection of Christ and this is what the Church must gladly announce and work so that it be manifested. He pleads for a particularist (not pluralist), yet non-exclusivist soteriology.

I think that at the root of the problem we find the tension between the communitarian or cosmic and the personal aspects of salvation. Hultgren does not see this distinction and perhaps does not integrate sufficiently soteriology and pneumatology, although he mentions the

experience of the Spirit as a criterion of theology in chapter 3. Is not the "incompatibility" he finds in the NT Christologies just an expression of the "already" and "not yet" tension for long seen to be at the heart of the Christian proclamation? In short, I am not convinced by Hultgren's theological oppositions, but have been much enlightened by his scholarly study and challenged by his views.

There have been a number of populist and controversial "Lives of Jesus" published recently Wright critiques the search-for-the-historical-Jesus movements and three recent books[1] His book ought to be compulsory reading in a Christology course as Wright addresses with clarity, sharpness, wit and balanced sarcasm major issues in the study of Jesus and Christology

The book is really only a glimpse of major studies undertaken by the author· *The New Testament and the People of God* (1992) and *Jesus and the Victory of God* (1993) Though he critiques three popular books, he judges that a serious study of the major issues in conversation with the serious research done by others is the way to educate Christians and the churches In the first chapter he surveys the history of studies of Jesus from Reimarus, Strauss, Renan, Schweitzer who demolished the prior work (Old Portraits, Old Quest) through the work of Kähler, Barth, Bultmann to the "New Quest" of Käsemann, Bornkamm, Schillebeeckx, Jeremias and the 'Jesus Seminar', up to the "Third Quest" represented by Vermes, Meier, Meyer, Borg, Brandon and Harvey As a conclusion to this survey Wright spells out the issues 1 Jesus and contemporary Judaism — its aspiration, hopes 2 Jesus' aims and the response he expected 3 Why did Jesus die? 4 Why did the early Church begin? What happened at Easter? 5 Why are the Gospels what they are?

Wright himself addresses one or other of these questions both as he critiques Thiering (*Jesus the Man A New Interpretation from the Dead Sea Scrolls*), Wilson (*Jesus*) and Spong (*Born of a Woman A Bishop Rethinks the Birth of Jesus*) and in a final, brief and concise chapter outlines his understanding of Jesus This chapter deserves attention as Wright places Jesus within Palestine and Judaism, reflects on the Kingdom of God, its continuity and discontinuity with Jewish hopes, Jesus' affirmation and subversion of these hopes and his own self-consciousness including his attitude to his death, the awareness of the resurrection and his vision of a future community

His critique of the three recent books is devastating yet fair. He acknowledges good points and weaknesses in the Church's understanding of Jesus and consequently in its practice and theology He scrutinizes the arguments and conclusions of each writer and is merciless with shoddy thought and logic, unfounded presuppositions and what is historically untenable We quote the conclusions of his critique

[1] N T Wright, **Who Was Jesus?** London. SPCK, 1992. Pp ix-107 N p ISBN 0-281-04670-0

of each book:

What is left of Thiering's theory, then? Not much. Her appeal to the idea of a jigsaw puzzle looks more and more suspicious. She has put together the historical puzzle of Jesus and early Christianity by the dubious method of re-cutting all the bits of the puzzle so that they fit each other despite their original shape. Where this still doesn't work, she has decided, quite arbitrarily, that the two bits of picture she is trying to fit together are 'really' the same. If one jigsaw piece has a horse on it, and the next one a rabbit, the naive puzzle-solver will think they don't match. Thiering simply announces that, in the 'pesher' method, horses and rabbits are the same thing. John Mark is the centurion at the foot of the cross. Mary Magdalene is Jairus' daughter, and also the maid Rhoda. Anyone can do jigsaw puzzles by this method (p. 35)

Wilson's Jesus ('A Moderately Pale Galilean') is a pale and distorted version of the real thing The portrait is something of a caricature· some of the features are there all right, and some indeed are finely drawn But so many are missing, and so many are out of shape, that it is only just recognizable And I do not mean 'recognizable within orthodox Christianity' I mean 'recognizable as serious history'

According to the standards Wilson himself sets up, therefore, his book has to be judged a failure. It has some moving moments, and poses some of the right questions But as a whole and in a good many of its parts, it simply does not convince (pp 63-64)

There is plenty in Spong's book which appears plausible enough. On several issues, what he says is unexceptional in terms of the run of contemporary New Testament scholarship In addition, some of his protests against the subjugation of women within the church have some validity, even if he does become a little hysterical in linking the problem so directly to Matthew's and Luke's birth stories, and even if he does give an amazingly caricatured picture of church history in order to sustain his rhetoric But in the concluding chapters of his work he gives rein to pure fantasy, which in the event puts him well outside the bracket of serious scholarship, or even serious scepticism of the A N. Wilson variety.

His final contentions are worthy of Barbara Thiering. He argues, first, that Jesus was conceived illegitimately, and quite probably by an act of sexual violence, i.e rape Ironically, a good deal of his 'argument' here consists of very literalistic readings of a few passages in the gospels, like the wedding at Cana. Like Thiering's 'pesher', his 'midrash' is quickly abandoned when necessary Most of his suggestions in this area are, he admits, highly speculative. It is mainly an appeal to a radical Christian imagination: if we can find God in a human figure bruised, beaten and dying on a cross, can we not also find him in one conceived in an act of violence?

Put like that, the answer is, of course, yes; but there are many guises in which one *could* 'find God' and yet which nobody supposes were true of the real Jesus.

He finally suggests that Jesus was married, quite probably to Mary Magdalene. One of his most ingenious arguments (p. 192) is that Jesus and his mother attended a wedding together, in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11) (pp. 89-90)

In the light of Wright's critique we turn to the many questions students and lay people ask about Jesus especially after some exposure to biblical studies and contemporary theology and to popular articles on books like Wilson's, Thiering's and Spong's Brown gathered questions about the Bible into a useful book, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible* A similar book now exists on Christology.[6]

Cook has taught Christology for years and been involved in pastoral ministry. He has gathered together 101 questions he has been asked on Jesus Christ He has expressed concisely his own basic theological stance on Christology "I would agree with those theologians and biblical scholars today who would 'recontextualize' the Johannine-patristic-conciliar tradition (the traditional image [of Jesus with emphasis on the Divine]) within a more historical and processive or developmental view of Jesus (the contemporary image [of Jesus with emphasis on his full humanity])" (p 6) He however, insists that the Incarnation is "the most essential of all Christian faith-affirmations because it is the most radical. Incarnation affirms the personal self-involvement of God in our human history and our human experience Nothing touches more deeply the very core of our humanness"(p 6).

The questions are divided into various types Questions about sources and their interpretation (Q 1-10), questions about Jesus' life, ministry, death which are historical and demand historical responses (Q 11-55), Questions and responses which are both historical and theological (Q 56-66) and finally theological questions related to the earliest interpretations of Jesus' death, resurrection and the continued process of reinterpretation upto our era

Both the questions, covering all types of areas, and the answers make this a valuable book for teachers and students of Christology There is some overlap with Brown's book as the Bible enters into these areas The answers are clear, honest, concise and reflect good modern theological knowledge, perspective and attitudes

An area of continued interest is the Jewishness of Jesus though attempts to describe this differ as can be seen in works of Vermes, Borg, Sanders, Wright Charlesworth has gatherd a series of previously (or now) published studies which deserve attention in the study

[6]Michael L. Cook, S J, **Responses to 101 Questions about Jesus.** Mahwah Paulist Press, 1993 Pp x-124 $ 8 95 ISBN 0-8091-3428-4

of Christology.[7] The subject is important for Christian-Jewish dialogue and for all Christians since "it connects Christians with the humanity of Jesus and helps them avoid a longtime tendency to docetism" (p. 124).

The line up of contributions is impressive: Cox, Charlesworth, Meier, Harrington, Flusser, Segal, Rivkin and Küng. I would suggest readers begin with Harrington's essay *"The Jewishness of Jesus. Facing Some Problems,"* as he spells out the methodological problems related to three areas in the contemporary study of Jesus' Jewishness. The areas are: (1) Judaism in Jesus time — the more we know, the less we know; (2) Sources about Jesus the Jew — not much in Jewish writings, the "tendentions" character of the Gospels and consequent problems related to the search for the historical Jesus, (3) Theological assessment of Jesus by Jewish and Christian writers. Harrington summarizes the conclusion of three representative writers whose picture of Jesus has historical probabilities:

> These three scholars situate Jesus in different contexts: Galilean charismatic Hasidism (Vermes), apocalyptic restoration movements (Sanders), and Pharisaism with its debate between the schools of Hillel and Shammai (Falk). They attribute different intentions to Jesus: calling for repentance in light of the coming Kingdom and communicating the experience of God as Father (Vermes), preparing for the restoration of Judaism (Sanders), and establishing a new religion for gentiles on the basis of the seven Noahide commandments (Falk). All three agree that the Roman officials bear ultimate responsibility for Jesus' death but give different reasons why Jesus' Jewish opponents may have collaborated with the Romans: his charismatic style (Vermes), the threat posed to the Jerusalem Temple and by the kinds of people that Jesus attracted (Sanders), and Shammaite fears about the new religion for gentiles that Jesus proposed (Falk) (p.127)

With a certain impatience and sarcasm Meier critiques facile depictions of the historical Jesus be they overly fundamentalist or too prone to reflect the ideology of the interpreter. Aware of the fragile character of the sources, he describes the major features of Jesus' life and ministry, always tentative and avoiding dogmatism. Though he concludes with these words, "With a ministry of two or three years he attracted and infuriated his contemporaries, mesmerized and alienated the ancient world, unleashed a movement that has done the same ever since, and thus changed the course of history forever" (p. 107), yet the Jesus who emerges in his portrait and the description of his ministry seems to lack those characteristic which would account for his murder and profound influence on others. Meier's Jesus is rather an eschatological prophet.

[7]James H. CHARLESWORTH (ed.), **Jesus' Jewishness. Exploring the Place of Jesus in Early Judaism.** New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1991. Pp. 288. ISBN 0-8245-1061-5

Charlesworth has two important contributions. In the first he makes a number of valid and important points about Jesus' religion — contemporary Judaism. There are a series of terms used by scholars which need to be adapted, corrected, qualified or dropped. He lists some: early Judaism, Hellenistic, Diasporic Jews, Old and New Testament, intertestamental, normative Judaism, sectarian Judaism, sects, primitive Christianity, Judaism. The basic reason for his cautions is that "Judaism" was a much more complex reality, a very sophisticated religion and the Jewish and Hellenistic worlds interpenetrated. Also we have a knowledge of the period far exceeding the knowledge of fifty or more years ago when these terms were created Charlesworth also comments on the attitudes for good exegesis and on the canon of sacred writings in Jesus' time, and attempts to describe the Judaisms of Jesus' time In his second essay he lists and comments on the sources available now which enable us to understand the religious world in which Jesus and the earliest Christians lived — Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the fruits of archaeology. However Harrington's caution is still justified that the more we know the less we know Charlesworth also draws attention to the "Palestinian Jesus movement" How did these followers of Jesus understand him, his work and purposes -- the pre-resurrection Christology?

There are a number of attempted portraits of the Jewish Jesus Vermes's ideas are partially represented in his essay, "Jesus the Jew" which has to be supplemented by a study of Jesus' teaching and Jesus' own religion as related to Christianity The charismatic figures help to understand him Flusser rightly situates the love commandment within a growing sensitivity in Jewish teaching to the relationship between the attitude of love of the neighbour and righteousness, reward/punishment and God's mercy He sees the newness of Jesus' teaching in the unconditional and all-embracing demand of his teaching on love His description of Jesus' ancestry and early life is interesting I doubt that he really was a Davidid and have serious reservations about Jesus' "severing of ties with his estranged family" (cf p 174, 163) Flusser's Jesus is a teacher "who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (p 170)

I did not find Segal's article on "Jesus, the Revolutionary" so useful as he depends too much on an understanding of apocalyptic and the criterion of dissimilarity to find there the historical Jesus Rivkin develops ideas of the levels of power, types of domination and oppression, the world of fear and the different Sanhedrins to place the responsibility of Jesus' death ultimately at the door of the Imperial system He concludes· "It is in this maelstrom of time, place, and circumstance, in tandem with impulse-ridden, tempest-tossed, and blinded sons of men, that the tragedy of Jesus' crucifixion is to be found. *It was not the Jewish people who crucified Jesus*, and it was *not the Roman people — it was the imperial system*, a system that victimized the Jews, victim-

ized the Romans, and victimized the Spirit of God" (p. 257).

The other contributions are concerned with various aspects of the Jewish Christian dialogue. The book continuously cautions Christian students and teachers not to make a caricature of Jesus' religion, and to respect its depths, grasp how it nourished him, and learn to see what is his specific contribution as a religious genius, never forgetting that God revealed himself in Jesus as a human person who belonged to the Jewish people, culture, society and religion.

Another major area of concern in Christology rising from the shift to contextual methodologies is the ways Jesus Christ has been re-expressed in other cultures. A group of authors concentrate on Africa. Schreiter has gathered a collection of essays on African Christology which illustrate also contextual methodologies.[8] J. Mattam reviewed earlier another study of African theology (*African Theology in Its Social Context*, 1992 *VJTR* 57 [1993] 635-36) which could complement these remarks

African contextual theology/Christology is of two main categories — culture-related and liberation-related. The collected essays are of two types though there is an overlapping. One group surveys types of Christology and methods, while the other group offers studies for an African Christology Important aspects in all studies are the dialogue between African culture or the socio-economic situations and the Gospel (and later Tradition, to a point) and the analysis of culture. The following are some aspects which are analysed in dialogue with the Christian revelation ancestral relationships, the role and place of ancestors, rites of passage, stages of life to full maturity, mediator of the divine, the birth-degeneration-regeneration cycle, personality in vitalistic terms, initiation rites, sickness and holistic healing, the African spirit world, gesta of the ancestors, independent churches. Though the adjective "African" is used, authors are aware that within Africa (i.e., sub-Saharan Africa) there is a great diversity in the anthropological data, and yet when compared with European culture there are also great similarities among the African peoples Liberation theologies analyse post-Independent Africa and the socio-economic and political situation specific to African countries

The re-interpretation of Jesus Christ has to be culturally intelligent and fecund (praxis) in the lives of Christians as well as basically faithful to revelation One author explains thus: "In most African countries the prime theological urgency consists in discovering the true face of Jesus Christ, that Christians may have the living experience of that face, in depth and according to their own genius" (p. ix). Some of the titles/themes of the Christologies developed are. Ancestor, Master of Initiation, Elder Brother, Chief (critiqued as inadequate), Prophet, Priest Potentate, One-who-does-not-break his oath, King-Priest (with many

[8]**Faces of Jesus in Africa** Robert J Schreiter (ed) Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991. Pp. xiii-181. $ 16 95. ISBN 0-88-344-768-1,

sub-titles), Head supreme universal Ancestor Spirit and above all Healer.

There are four essays of a liberational orientation — a feminist perspective, Jesus the Healer (belongs to both categories), Liberator, and Christ and African suffering.

In various ways the essays are aware of their choice of anthropological rather than theocentric Christologies, of the shift from who Jesus is to what he does, of their starting point being Jesus of Nazareth, of the various models of Christology (eschatological, cosmic, liberational, anthropological and healer type) used.

These essays will be of special interest to all students who are attempting to create Indigenous Peoples' Christologies. The essays entitled *Christology in the Village* reminds us that often there is a gap between the Christology of the people and of the theologian, and more importantly that the Christology of the people is often an imported brand which does not respond to and resonate with the peoples' own historical, unconscious and concrete religio-cultural heritage.

We conclude these remarks with Schreiter's final words:

> All in all, these eleven essays present some of the faces of Jesus and how Africans today are responding to the Christ who encounters their cultures. Some of the struggles will look familiar to persons from other cultures: the struggle for integrating Christian and local identity, the exploration of local images to give intelligible form to Christian confession, the struggle to find the images of solidarity with those who suffer. But these African theologies give us more. They ask whether death always has to be identified with punishment and cannot be seen as a necessary step on the way to human fullness. In so doing, they raise questions about the models of salvation that have dominated Western European theology. Must we think in terms of Christ's saving us only as atonement? Might we not retrieve Paul's image of redemption as freeing from slavery and inclusion — a model of access and inclusion rather than substitutionary atonement? Has the secularized West been too casual in its dismissal of the spirit world? And what role should healing play in contemporary Christianity? More questions could be adduced. But these represent some of the most formidable challenges that African theology is presenting to the world church today. As it struggles to find the Christ active in its midst — Christ the African — it mirrors in a dramatic way a whole range of issues that touches the lives of Christian communities around the world. It is hoped that this volume of essays by African theologians will provide some entry for the rest of us into that vibrant and exciting network of churches today (p. xiii).

Another important aspect of Christological studies today is the pluralism rising from the contextual method in theology. We comment

upon a survey of such Christologies.[9] Many Christians including theologians and Church leaders in certain parts of the world and teaching institutions do not recognize the profound effects of context on all theologies. These same groups often also forget that to be intelligible and fruitful Christian tradition must be re-interpreted in response to the historical, concrete contexts of the believing communities. Authentic theology is the fruit of that dialogue between the foundational tradition (the Scripture), the centuries-old ever-being-reinterpreted understanding of Scripture (Tradition) and the contemporary believing communities with their historical, cultural, socio-economic, political questions and problems, affected by ethnic, gender and language factors. In this book the authors do not give adequate emphasis to Tradition as a partner in the theological dialogue. They concentrate more on a bipolar dialogue between Scripture and the contemporary believing communities as is clear from their opening chapter and their remarks on the contextual nature of theology/Christology.

The aim of the book, written by two white American, middle class Presbyterians is to help readers listen to the theological ferment focused on Christology going on among theologians from the developing (they use Third) world and so enter into conversation with these Christologies. They also want contextual theologians to dialogue with each other. They clearly describe the shift in theological searching from the Western/North American world to Asia, Africa and South America and insist that these recent theologies must be heard and respected

They have selected some representative theologians from each Region, including North American Black and Feminist theologians, and organized their description of the Christologies of each Region into three sections (a) a description of the crucial issues that must be addressed if the theology is to be relevant to the particular community (e g., Africa — culture and oppression; Asia — poverty and religiocultural diversity and plurality, North America — black people's oppression, patriarchy); (b) A delineation of the sources and methods of reflection (sources — Bible yet often only selectively used; Scriptural/traditional religions, popular religiosity, colonialist culture, social realities , methods. hermeneutical suspicion, see, judge, act, cultural/human context and the Bible, or vice versa, social/Marxist analysis, independent churches .), (c) the actual way Jesus is portrayed in the selected contextual theologies (Jesus as Ancestor, Elder Brother, Ethical Exemplar, Cosmic Christ, Liberator, the Black Jesus, "Jesus immersed in the Jordan of Asian religions and Calvary of Asian poverty" (p 73)

The following chapters describe major contextual Christologies from Latin America (Historical Jesus, Liberator and Prophet, the Kingdom, Option for the Poor..); from Asia (Cosmic Christ, Jesus the Humanizer

---

[9]Priscilla Pope-Levison and John R. Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*. Louisville Westminister/John Knox, 1992 Pp 232 $ ISBN 0-164-25165-X.

[caste, poverty, human rights...], Liberator, Jesus as the pain-love of God [pain-love polarity]); from Africa (Firstborn among the Living/the Dead, Chief, Healer, Elder Brother..), North America (Black Messiah, the Liberator, Jesus and women/Patriarchy, Reconciler...). Each regional theology is clearly not monolithic and the authors compare different theologians, their sources, methods, general theology and their Christology (e g , A. Pieris and M M Thomas). I judge they give an accurate and balanced description of the regional orientations under the three headings and a fair selective description of the Christologies. Asian students would find that section too restricted to India and a few other thinkers like Song

The final chapter is the most important part of the book because the authors enter into conversation with all the various Christologies, the regional problems, the sources and methods chosen and the consequent theologies The purpose is to show how dialogue among these theologies can enrich each theology They describe how the contexts dialogue with the Bible and critique this dialogue — e g , for Liberation theologies the resurrection plays a lesser role The major part of this chapter deals with dimensions of the dialogue between the contexts and its consequences. They do this under four headings· (1) Sources and Methods, with a critical evaluation of the place of experience, tradition and community and consequent methodology at play in all theologies, (2) Use of the Bible, which highlights how theologies work with canons within the canon (e g. Luke's Gospel, Exodus, Col 1 15-20, Hebrews) and the need to dialogue with larger section of the Bible, (3) Liberation and Inculturation, indicating how many theologies are constructed on an "either/or" basis in this area and the need for a "both/and" approach, (4) The Scandal of Particularity, a problem rising from the particularity of race, religion, culture, social status (Dalit) and gender, of Jesus and of the contexts

Though the book concentrates on Christology as its focal point yet the authors expose readers to many pertinent questions of contextual methodology In my experience few students are able to theologize contextually in a consistent, convincing and adequate manner I recommend the book

A selection of essays by Dahl completes this survey of some recent works on Christology [10] This volume includes all the essays in Dahl's *The Crucified Messiah* (out of print) and five other studies "The Crucified Messiah and the Endangered Promises" (1983), "Sources of Christological Language" (unpublished), "The Neglected Factor in New Testament Theology" (little attention to God) (1975); "Trinitarian Baptismal Creeds and New Testament Christology" (unpublished — a related study published in Sweedish in 1983), "Julius Wellhausen on the

[10] Nils Alstrup DAHL, **Jesus the Christ. The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine** Edited by Donald H Juel Minneapolis Fortress Press, 1991, pp. 249 $ 24 95 ISBN 0-8006 -2458-0

New Testament" (1982).

Some aspects of Dahl's thought deserve mention because of the importance of his insights He persistently studies the text of the NT with great care, as well as the complex world of Jesus and the earliest Church (so often simplified or made to fit into the scholars' reconstructions) and the relationship between the historical life of Jesus and Christian faith affirmations. He questions accepted opinions, asks new questions, indicates avenues which need to be studied and sketches new approaches and answers to problematic questions. African (Asian) theologians seeking to describe Jesus in terms more contextually meaningful to their situation could read profitably his "Sources of Christological Language" in which he studies the various fluid, interrelated worlds of thought which influenced the NT writers. Those seeking a bridge between Jesus' self- consciousness and the earliest Christian proclamation of him as Christ will find his essay on the crucified Messiah useful. He judges that Jesus was crucified as a false messiah (King of the Jews) Experiencing Jesus' vindication led the earliest Church to reinterpret the complex messianic stream of Jewish thought

Those inclined to conclude that the affirmation of Jesus as Lord, Son of God (God) and universal saviour to be late expressions and influenced by hellenistic culture will be forced to rethink such facile simplifications by this probe of a great biblical scholar Many will profit from his essay on "The Problem of the Historical Jesus." Dahl makes his readers think and return to primary sources

Book Reviews

More Christologies

Who Do You Say I Am? Introduction to Christology. By Jacques Dupuis, S.J. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994. Pp. vi-194. $ 16.95 (pbk). ISBN 0-88244-940-4.

Jesus the Liberator. A Historical-Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth. By Jon Sobrino. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993. Pp x-308 $ 19 95. ISBN 0-88344-930-7.

To complement the review article by P Meagher published in this issue we bring to the notice of our readers two recently received and important books on Christology.

Fr Dupuis is well known to our readers as a former editor of the Journal who taught Christology for many years in India and now continues to do so at the Gregorian University in Rome His own description of the book as an "introduction to Christology" offers us the perspective from which to present it. The book gives evidence of a long experience of teaching and assiduous reading In the first section of his 13-page bibliography on "Some Recent Christologies" he records 76 books or important sections of books by 44 authors who have written in the 25 years between 1966 and 1993 Little escapes his notice and his presentation is thoroughly documented

The book is basically theological in its approach Even when necessarily referring to the biblical revelation about Jesus and studying it competently, Dupuis never forgets the memory of the Church within which the biblical revelation was formed and continues to live He starts by a reflection on method in Christology The dogmatic approach starts with the affirmations of tradition and finds the biblical justification for them The genetic approach follows the historical development of the doctrine from the earliest to the more "developed" formulations and to our times. Dupuis shows the insufficiency of both these approaches. He opts for an inductive approach that is based on the dialectic interplay of the present experience of reality itself, the data of tradition, and the theologian himself or herself. This leaves room for a plurality of Christologies, even perhaps for dogmatic pluralism, and for inculturation and new developments The data of tradition remain as firm guide posts in the theological task, but are not the only factors to play a role in it

After reflecting on the method, Dupuis gives an quick overall view of trends in recent Christology, specially after Bultmann, including liberation and feminist Christologies. The study leads him to formulate some guiding principles for and "integral approach" to Christology the principles of dialectical tension, of totality, of plurality, of historical continuity, of integration

The biblical (and pre-NT) data are studied in two successive chapters covering the self-understanding of Jesus himself, the early kerygmatic proclamation and the development of Christology within the New Testament itself There may be a tendency to harmonise the data into a "development" pattern Dupuis rejects those trends that see NT writings as proposing conflicting Christologies among which one must choose While he is surely right in this, the plurality found in the NT does not seem to easily fall into a chronological development pattern. one of the earliest texts, Phil 2 6-11, presents quite an "advanced" Christology In the fourth chapter Dupuis explains with great clarity the development of the Christological doctrine up to Constantinople III The next chapter deals theologically with the debated point of the human psychol-

ogy of Jesus that prolongs the reflections of the historical Jesus' self-identity in ch.3. (Is the Messianic confession of Peter dismissed too easily from being a historical memory?) The last chapter expounds on the universality of Christ's significance and redeeming role, a theme treated more in detail in the earlier book *Jesus Christ and the Encounter of Religions* (cf VJTR 55[1991] 174-6).

On page 140 the author explains that his study is limited to "Christology proper" but remains open to explicit treatment of soteriology. It is to be hoped that Dupuis will present a fully developed soteriology without which Christology remains incomplete. He of course does touch on soteriology at many points of his study, specially in reference to the early kerygma But a specific study of what redemption means would perhaps lead to integrate many aspects of liberation theology that find relatively little place in this study The study of Jesus' options and the way he manifested the salvation of God will surely help us to understand the mystery of his human and divine personality A good book for students of theology who will find a sure guidance in a field which is so full of confusing ideas and uncertainties for many Perhaps an Indian edition would be indicated if the prophecy of W M Thompson is fulfilled that the book is "likely to be a favourite for courses of Christology " For Dupuis deals not only with past doctrine but with present day concerns and shows the relevance of the former to the latter

Sobrino's book was already reviewed in November last year Cf p 699 where J Misquitta finds the study of the cross of Jesus in relation to God and to the oppressed people receives "exquisite" treatment and that in spite of its perspective being limited to the historical Jesus, the book has gained in depth in comparison with the earlier *Christology at the Crossroad. Jesus the Liberator* shows a thought that is more mature, specially in the exegetically treatment of Scripture. We refer our readers to that review of the Spanish original.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Treatise on the Passover and Dialogue of Origen with Heraclides and his fellow Bishops on the Father, the Son, and the Soul. Transl. and annotated by Robert J. DALY (Ancient Christian Writers, Vol 54). New York/Mahwah, N.J., Paulist Press, 1992, Pp vi-121. ISBN 0-8091-0452-0.

The accidental discovery of the Tura papyrus (Tura is about twelve km. south of Cairo) in August 1941 favoured the critical edition of the two works of Origin mentioned in the title. Daly, a patristic scholar, has translated into English and annotated these two treatises. He gives a detailed description of the Codex, the damaged stage in which it was found, and the necessity of other sources to reconstruct the missing parts in the newly discovered papyrus.

The *Treatise on the Passover* is presented in the context of the varied understanding and the explanations of passover given by early Christian writers like Melito of Sardis, Apollinaris of Hierapolis, Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus It is believed that Origen wrote this treatise to counter the position of Hippolytus.

Origen had come across a false interpretation of the etymology of the Greek word *pascha* for passover from the Greek verb *paschein*, which means to suffer Therefore it was interpreted that the passover was the prefiguration of the passion of Christ Origen shows that this kind of interpretation is wrong by pointing out that passover comes from the Hebrew word *pesach* which means passage or passing over, and not passion. From this etymological study Origen concludes that passover is not the prefiguring of the passion of Christ

but a figure of Christ himself, of Christ's passing over to the Father and because of our incorporation into Christ, our own continuous passing over with Christ to the Father This treatise brings to focus Origen's understanding of the spiritual meaning of Scripture

The *Dialogue with Heraclides* is the only surviving dialogue of Origen. This treatise seems to be the record of a synod-like meeting of bishops, theologians and lay people to discuss on faith and liturgy Origen's magisterial theological authority comes out strongly in it. The treatise was already available in a critical edition and translated into French, German, Italian, and in English by H Chadwick R Daly gives us yet another annotated English translation

The translation of the *Treatise on the Passover* follows closely the French critical edition (G Guéraud and P Nautin, *Origène Sur la Pâque* Christianisme antique 2, Paris Beauchesne 1979) Besides this French critical edition and the present English translation by Daly, the *Treatise on the Passover* is not available in any other modern language This translation comes as an enrichment to patristic students and scholars of the English-speaking world

LEONARD FERNANDO, S J

Ecumenism

Signs of the Spirit World Council of Churches Official Report Seventh Assembly Canberra, Australia, 7-20 February 1991 Edited by Michael Kinnamon Geneva/Grand Rapids, WCC Publications/Wm B Eerdmans, 1991 Pp xiv-396 $ 23.50 ISBN 2-8254-1000-4/0-8028-0628-7

This report contains an abundance of information and insights into the experience of the 7th General Assembly of the WCC The Editor introduces the report with his own personal reflections on and an overview of the Assembly.

The major addresses on the theme "Come, Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation" were given by the orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa and the inspiring Korean woman theologian Chung Hyun Kyung. Whose memorable and dramatic presentation is still remembered They represent two approaches to theology, deductive and inductive, and all that is implied in them in respect to Christian praxis and the modern world There is a profound tension at the heart of theology, and consequently, in the praxis, the ministry and the WCC itself

The theme was divided into subthemes and the reports of each of the four working groups are given. The WCC Assembly addressed itself to specific issues and concerns of the modern world in 1991 and these aspects of the Assembly were spelt out in a number of *Statements* These include a statement of the Gulf War, on South Africa, on the Pacific, on the Baltic States and of tension in the new Soviet Union A major statement was on "Indigeneous Peoples and Land Rights — Move Beyond Words," as this is a major issue in Australia as well as other countries.

The life and working of the WCC over the last few years is documented in the *Reports* of the Moderator, General Secretary and various Committees.

The report ends with an assortment of information about the Assembly, preassembly meetings, messages, statements and reflections

All theological libraries which consider Ecumenism to be a major concern of the churches ought to have this extensive report

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Documentary History of Faith and Order 1963-1993. By Gunther Gassmann (ed), Faith and Order Paper No 159 Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993, pp ix-325. $ 19.90. ISBN 2-8254-1101-9.

This well-presented volume is a wel-

come sequel to the earlier one that appeared 31 years ago (*A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement 1927-1963*, by Lukas VISCHER [ed.], St. Louis, Missouri: The Bethany Press, 1963). Students of ecumenism will welcome this volume with delight if not with immense gratitude to the WCC and to Rev. Dr Gunther Gassmann for his timely contribution.

Much water has flowed down the ecumenical river since the first volume was published in 1963 Since then there have been four WCC Assemblies, two Faith & Order Conferences and a host of Faith & Order Consultations and meetings. Of course one is not able to find in this volume everything that the WCC and Faith & Order have produced during the last 31 years but what one finds here is certainly the best and the most useful as far as ecumenism is concerned.

The book is divided into four sections, namely *Assemblies of the WCC Statements on Unity* (Section I), *World Conferences on Faith and Order* (Section II), *Main Faith and Order Themes 1963-1993* (Section III) and *Specific Faith and Order Projects* (Section IV)

Each section contains a general survey of the concerned topic as well as texts of the original documents which are very well numbered Thus the book can serve as a good primary source for theological reference and research. I myself have found the last two sections extremely useful The systematic arrangement of the material makes the handling of the book easy and pleasurable.

Besides its purely academic utility I believe the book has a catechetical utility too if the ecumenical advance it signifies in crucial areas like Eucharist, Ministry, Authority, Conciliarity, etc., is to be brought to the knowledge of a wider circle in the Church at large. Only then will it create a certain ecumenical consciousness in the Church and contribute to the ecumenical search for the Church's visible unity.

A. COUTO

Conciliar Fellowship. A Common Goal. By Aram KESHISHIAN. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1992. Pp. xvii-125. ISBN 2-8254-1042-X.

The relentless quest in the ecumenical movement for the visible unity of the Church had led to the development or rather the rediscovery of 'conciliar fellowship' as the vision, the model and the goal of the ecumenical movement. It is related to the understanding of the Church as "communion" (*koinonia*).

Aram Keshishian analyzes the vision of conciliar fellowship in its various aspects Conciliar fellowship as a common goal is an attempt to recover the conciliar unity of the early undivided Church. Keshishian argues that it was not a unity based on the power and authority of the Papacy but a unity based on Baptism and Eucharist as the sacraments of communion that express and effect the unity, apostolicity and catholicity of the Church, locally and universally The ancient unity was therefore a communion of local churches in many ways diverse from one another but united in one apostolic faith. This unity found its expression in an Ecumenical Council which was the supreme authority in the Church From this perspective the Roman Catholic understanding of conciliarity centered on the supremacy and infallibility of the Bishop of Rome is a challenge to the ecumenical movement

What I find missing in Keshishian's work is a treatment of the theme "Unity of the Church and the Renewal of the Human Community" and its relationship to the question of Apostolic Faith. If I am not mistaken the WCC has initiated a programme called "Conciliar Process for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation." Without this essential "explication" of the Apostolic Faith I do

not think conciliar fellowship is ever possible. I fear Keshishian remains tied down to his Orthodox bearings whereas the WCC has a richer, more dynamic and more "life-centered" vision of conciliar fellowship focussing on the Church as the prophetic sign and instrument of the unity of humankind

I must acknowledge that it was Keshishian's work that inspired my M.Th Dissertation on Conciliar Fellowship submitted to Vidyajyoti in 1994. I am grateful to him.

A. COUTO

One wind, many flames. Church Unity and the Diversity of the Churches. By Bernard Thorogood Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991 Pp 71 $ 6 95 ISBN 2-8254-1024-1

This wonderful little book is a summary of what ecumenism is all about Through eleven brief chapters Bernard Thorogood presents the main thrust and orientation of the ecumenical movement

As the very title of the book suggests, the ecumenical movement focusses on a model and vision of visible unity of the Church based on "Unity in Diversity " Diversity and pluriformity belong to the very being of the Church they are essential to a Church present in every land and every culture However there is also the other side of the coin — "the unity which is also required by Scripture " That quest for unity belong to the vision of the wholeness of the people of God

Thorogood makes a good critique of the Roman Catholic model of unity as also of the Protestant model exposing the strong and the weak points of both Ultimately both need to change if visible unity is to become a reality in love, truth and witness Intransigent positions rooted in historical traditions and secular models do not make for Church unity The *kairos* of the ecumenical movement demands conversion and the "plunge of faith." The author describes this plunge as a pilgrimage "towards the city" (ch.11). This pilgrimage is the Church's constant striving "to live the kingdom." It means "we shall worship and work as people of one city to serve one world" in the recognition that it is a "permanent characteristic of the fellowship of Christ that we resist the forces that would pull us apart, constantly receive the diversity of human responses to the Gospel and never cease to form patterns of unity "

Like every ecumenical visionary, Thorogood longs for a visibly united Church in which there will be total unity of fellowship in the sacraments, fully accepted and acknowledged ministry, a core of cradle statement, constant repentance before the Cross of Christ, united action to support the weak and the oppressed, considerable liberty for every local church to shape its worship and mission, a common central council to represent all, and joyful acceptance of the diversities of language and culture

Such a united Church is of course "a million miles from where we are" but it is also true, as every ecumenist believes, that it is not "far from the apostolic witness and intention "

A. COUTO

Religions

Pilgrimage of Hope. One Hundred Years of Global Interfaith Dialogue By Marcus Braybrooke London SCM Press/New York Crossroad 1992 Pp xvi-368 £ 30 00 (cased)

Last year much was written about the centenary of the Chicago Parliament of Religions In preparation for the celebrations the author of this book had published an article in our Journal on "The Interfaith Movement The Present Reality" (56 [1992] 181-93) The Chicago event can be considered as the symbolic beginning of a century where the concern for interreligious dialogue and co-

operation has slowly grown first in liberal movements at the margin of organised religion and then in the churches themselves.

The book is a record of the high points of this century-old pilgrimage, covering mostly the English-speaking world. It starts by devoting four chapters to the Parliament of Religions, known to many of us only by the speeches of Vivekananda. The forty-page study, based on the record of Burrows but also on journals of the time and other sources, discovers the human faces behind what otherwise looks a rather impersonal event. We know how the idea was conceived, who brought it forth to actual reality (C.C Bonney, J.H. Barrows and J.L. Jones), how the proceedings went, who the participants were and the main trends of the speeches.

This study is followed by a short history and achievements of some interreligious movements, specially the International Association for Religious Freedom, the World Congress of Faiths (of which the author was chairman for five years), the Temple of Understanding which aims at enrolling top religious and political leaders in the movement, and the World Conference of Religion and Peace.

The next part is devoted to "bilateral conversations" of which, however, one of the partners was almost invariably Christian. with Jews, with Muslims, with Hindus (one page is devoted to Fr Albert Nambiaparambil "whose energy and enthusiasm are boundless" — [237]), with Buddhists, Sikhs and Traditional Religions. This is followed by ways in which dialogue is fostered from within organised religions as distinct from multireligious organisations. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the WCC Subunit on Dialogue are covered in seven pages each. The efforts within Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism are also recorded. And a separate section deals with movements with a specific "vocation to encourage unity" — the Theosophists, the Unitarians, the Baha'is, and the Unification Church and its derivates.

The book is very well documented and honest in its presentation and interpretation of facts. It shows that in general the movement avoids the temptation of aiming at creating a new world religion, and that it rather tries to discern the common agreed points, but also the differences and complementarities, and that it has often an aim of cooperation in solving human problems, even if the success in this is not conspicuous. One field that is not covered and could be of much interest is how interfaith coexistence and cooperation finds also political expression in some countries (e.g., Indonesia, Russia ...) in the form of ministries for religious affairs or other bodies. Though the Western world has generally adopted the North American model of a rigid separation of religion and politics, this is not the only possible model nor necessarily the best. A study of various models and how they function could be enlightening for all of us

An excellent book that must find a place in every theological library and in University departments.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Hindus. Their Religious Beliefs and Practices By Julius LIPNER. London: Routledge, 1994 Pp xiv-375 £ 45.00. ISBN 0-415-05181-9

The subtitle of the book shows its point of departure· "*Their* beliefs and practices." In a sense this is "yet another book on Hinduism" (p. 1) by an "outsider " But not quite. The author is in many ways an insider: born and educated in India, he breathed in lively Calcutta some of the best elements of the Hindu tradition. His years of scholarship and specialisation, mainly in Jadavpur University and the U.K., have been devoted to the themes of Indology. Moreover, by marriage he has become

even more of an 'insider' of the great tradition which he has studied for decades and describes with genuine empathy, free, however, from the defensive complexes of some Hindu authors. Lipner can on occasion be critical of this or that trait found among Hindus he is careful not to generalise and eager to expose the best in the tradition. He himself says: "Our study of the Hindu tradition will be largely phenomenological and historical That is, we shall be analysing the ideas, views and practices of the Hindus from their historical origins to the present day, not only in the role of observers but as far as possible from inside, from the Hindu perspective itself It is only in this way that we can begin to have some feel for this multi-faceted and astonishingly rich tradition Further, our approach will be mainly philosophical and theological in the broadest senses of these terms, though on occasion we may venture remarks which are sociological, anthropological, etc , when they seem appropriate" (p 20)

The book is *sui generis* it does not follow a chronological or even a clear thematic order except in a vague way Ideas flow to and fro from ancient times to modern consciousness, from one topic to a related one It almost looks like an extended informal talk to tourists about to visit India And yet there is an enormous amount of scholarship packed and delivered in this simple style One can never be exhaustive when writing on Hinduism, of course, but this book covers more than most Hardly any branch of the lush Hindu tradition is forgotten

The author starts with a good metaphor that runs through the book Hinduism is like the ancient Great Bunyan Tree of the Calcutta Botanical Gardens — a proliferating jungle of tree-trunks and aerial roots covering four acres in extent, without a clear centre of life and yet pulsating with a common sap, "new branches and roots forever springing up or down as others whither away" (p 5). Into this "jungle" the author enters with the help of a useful lamp and essential guides: a highly competent knowledge of Sanskrit, a deep understanding of Vedanta and Indian spirituality (cf. his earlier book on Ramanuja, *The Face of Truth*, Macmillan 1986) and a great familiarity specially with Bengal and modern studies of Hinduism (more than 200 titles in his bibliography).

The early sections, "Guiding Voices" (Vedas, varnasramas, caste, folklore, experience) and "Reason and Morality" (Epics, dharma), rely a good deal on the written records but constantly refer back to the experience of contemporary Hindus The last section, "Images of Time, Space and Eternity," collects more specifically and directly from the field, so to speak, symbols, practices, basic orientations of popular religion, without however forgetting the scholarly dimensions of these themes The four-page Index is clearly inadequate for a book of this type (cf the repeatedly used word *passim* in the Index) The publishers have not made the book reader-friendly footnotes are at the end, but the abbreviations they use are at the beginning of the book, but these and the notes in turn refer us to a later bibliography There is a limit to the number of fingers one can use when handling a book!

Scholars in India and those familiar with the Hindu tradition will surely enjoy this fresh presentation of a fascinating religion. Newcomers in the field will find it difficult to cope with the wealth of scholarship and the linguistic, philosophical and technical information packed in these pages. The information is reliable, although I have been at times puzzled by some data in chronology. are the Vedas composed till about 500 CE (p 32) even if we include the late classical Upanishads? Need Kalidasa be placed in the 4th century CE (p 76)? Can we speak of "vernacular metres" in the 6th-5th century BCE (p. 78)? I would have liked the treatment of caste (pp. 88ff) to go into more detail in the

question of the *pañcamas* who are below the sudras in the hierarchy. One errand zero makes Panini more difficult than he is· the Ashtadhyayı consists of 4,000 sutras, not 40,000 (p. 78) There may be an over-influence of traditional lexicographers when *mantra* is explained in relation to the verbs *tr* or *trar* *tra* is clearly a suffix denoting instrumentality (cp *gatra*, *vastra*, *netra*, *pavitram*, etc Cf Whitney, *Skt Grammar*, n. 1185) (p 52) P 53 quotes the text of the Gayatrı mantra but leaves the last line untranslated And note 13 of chapter 4 refers to O'Flaherty 1991, absent in the bibliography On p. 133 the last phrase of the paragraph should read, "Arjuna chooses Krishna "

This is truly a great book on Hinduism, both traditional and modern. It will be specially useful in India and should be available wherever students want a reasonable comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of what this great tradition, inclusive of many "little traditions," represents.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

The Impact of Islamic Fundamentalism.

By K.S DURRANY Delhi· ISPCK, 1993 Pp 156. Rs 60 ISBN 81-7214-063-0

After reading the book one is not sure about what the author wishes to say about Islamic fundamentalism Does he wish to say that Islamic fundamentalism is the Muslim effort to be faithful to God within the beliefs and structures of the Islamic faith? Is fundamentalism the effort and wish to base Muslim belief and practice on the Quran and Sunnah? Is it a feeling and belief that the Muslim faith is superior to other faiths? Is it the wish to see established "a perfect social order of Prophet Muhammad's time and of his immediate four sucessors"? In the course of reading the book one begins to wonder whether the author makes any distinction between traditional Islam, reformist Islam, secular Islam and Islamic fundamentalism between Islamic features of the Muslim faith and Islamic fundamentalism. Maybe the book was not intended to say anything about fundamentalism when it was first conceived and written.

On the other hand, the book provides very valuable and authentic information about Muslim organizations, movements, patterns of thinking and practices in India, and makes a good introduction to Islam in India.

Desiderio PINTO, S.J.

Leave the Temple. Indian Paths to Human Liberation.

Edited by Felix WILFRED Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992. Pp. viii-199 ISBN 0-88344-781-9

There is little doubt that, together with Latin America, India is today an important focus of creative theological reflection and output. Felix Wilfred has put together eleven articles by ten Indian sociologists, philosophers and theologians dealing with Indian liberational thinking. The title is inspired by the opening words of the well-known poem by Tagore "Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom does thou worship in this lonely corner of a temple with doors shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee! He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones . " These words sum up the revolution brought about by the Gospel and stressed by liberation theology

Walter Fernandes contributes two essays to the collection One studies the liberational movements among dalits and tribals, before and after independence The other reviews the various stages of the bhakti movement and sees it as an expression of the struggle of the oppressed. I find the chronology used here either vague or questionable the Gita is put between 600 BC and 300

AD; all the Puranas and Upapuranas are said to have taken shape from the 3rd to the 5th century AD; and to say that the Bhagavadgita and the Bhagavata-Purana belong to the first period of bhakti is to cheerfully span a thousand years in a dozen words

Yvon Ambroise analyses various forms and manners of oppression in Indian society, interlinking the economic, the social, the political, the ideological and the cultural systems The reaction to these forms is presented in the usual threefold schema of charity, development/institutional and liberational/people-oriented. I Puthiadam studies the dominant trends in Hindu thought specially as resulting from the contact with the West — the Hindu "renaissance" Perhaps one needs today to go beyond its classical authors and take into account the trends developed within political Hinduism, specially the various branches of the *sangh parivar* and by Shivananda and other Swamis, by the descendants of Gandhi, by Arun Shourie and the voice of Hindus abroad (the *Hinduism Today* group, Anantabachan, Arvind Sharma, etc) T K.John studies the contribution of Gandhi to an Indian liberation theology while X. Irudayaraj contrasts the two approaches to liberation, one centred on the exterior, and the Indian approach stressing interiority

The rest of the articles outline a more consciously Christian understanding of Liberation With his usual competence G Soares-Prabhu studies the "teaching" of Jesus as a model of pedagogy for liberation Samuel Rayan offers us a Jesus-inspired reflection on the question of caste and the dalits, while S Kappen outlines the characteristics of an Indian theology of liberation. The last two essays by M Amaladoss and F Wilfred draw out attention respectively to the interreligious nature of liberation in India and to the role of the Church's option for the poor, the "Awakening of the Last" (*antyodaya*).

This collection, which appeared first in German in a less complete form, should find a place in all theological libraries not only in India but wherever there is an opening to the theological contribution of the universal Church.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Lesseriana

Kabir Simply Wonderful. By R.H LESSER. Bangalore Asian Trading Corporation, 1994 Pp xviii-54 N p ISBN 81-7086-079-2

Forced Landing. By R H LESSER Bombay Better Yourself Books, 1994 Pp 111 Rs 25 ISBN 81-7108-226-2

Fr Lesser is indefatigable in his literary output He is also a lover of Kabir some of whose dohas he translated into English verse and published in 1985 under the title *Kabir Lover of Life* (*VJTR* 50 [1986] 228) This book may be considered a second edition of the same but contains 75 additional dohas As Archbishop Leobard says in the Foreword, "Kabir epitomises the rich, religious heritage of India He was unafraid to draw critically from the mystical experiences of its sages and saints of whatever persuasion and provenance Hinduism and Islam find forcible expression in Kabir and his thinking in no small measure influenced the founder of Sikhism Only India could have given birth to a Kabir More than ever before India needs to listen to the timely, direct and universal message of Kabir's poems and hymns "

Forced landing is a novelette around a forced landing of a Delhi-bound plane in Rajasthan and the interaction of the priest and the mission personnel with the various passengers in the plane — representing a cross-cut of the Indian middle-class The hero is naturally the missionary, the dynamic assistant priest in the mission Through the novel the

life work and orientation of the mission are presented at their best. Romance is interwoven with the story of the help generously offered to the stranded passengers. The book will help young boys and girls to understand the ideals of mission and priestly work. It will entertain and edify them.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Pushpanjali. By R.H. LESSER. Calcutta. P Lal (162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta 700045) Pp 66. Rs 100 (Hb), Rs 40 (Pb). ISBN 81-7189-550-6 (Hb) - 551-4 (Pb)

This collection of poems by the prolific Fr Lesser is published as A Writers Workshop Publication. The collection is prefaced by a short autobiography emphasizing the three great loves which have been the major threads running through all periods of Fr Lesser's life — love with India, love with literature and love with God revealed in Jesus Christ. Fr Lesser came from England to India at the age of four with his mother and has lived here all his life except for his priestly training in England and Europe. His life has been marked by great vitality, many interests, dedicated ministry and joy.

The poems are mainly religious and vary in style between a more distinct poetic style and prose in verse. They are full of feeling and the religious orientation and interests of his life. A good collection by a fine person.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Moral and Pastoral

Christian Ethics. Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II Vol 2 Special Moral Theology Rev ed. By Karl H PESCHKE, S.V.D. Bangalore: TPI, 1992, Pp xiv-822

This is the second revised edition of *Christian Ethics* dealing systematically with different areas of special moral theology and situating the moral issues in the contemporary world. As I read the volume, I got a clear impression that the context for the author's reflections is European. For instance, he discusses the triad of theological virtues in terms of religion in a secularised world.

One merit of the book is that it is sensitive to the inter-disciplinary method. The whole volume reflects the new perspectives and insights of Vatican II in the area of moral theology. The treatment of each theme is scripturally founded. The theological foundation of various topics is sufficiently clear but there are areas in which one misses important biblical insights. The section on love of neighbour in terms of the NT should have stressed the theological point of the unity of the love of God and love of neighbour. I have the impression that the biblical hermeneutic used for moral themes is rather weak in so far it does not insightfully bring out the meaning of the texts for our concerns and context.

The volume brought out by TPI serves a useful purpose but such a book is not adequate for moral theology in India in so far it is universalistic and European in its contextual reference. I find that the volume of George V Lobo, on General Moral Theology despite its limitations reflects a better sensitivity to the Indian, Asian and Third World dimensions. I do not expect the same kind of sensitivity from Peschke, even if there was third revised edition of this two-volume work. The lacunae I point out can be filled only by moral theologians in India who can write on general and special moral theology from the perspective of the Indian realities. I for one would insist that our moral theologians who use this volume have to complement it a good deal by reference to the contextual realities of India and the specific issues that we are facing with.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Whose Ministry? A Ministry of Health Care for the Year 2000. By Gillian PATERSON. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993. Pp. xi-120. $ 8 95 ISBN 2-8254-1118-3.

The ultimate concern of the book is the *place* of voluntary (Christian) institutions in today's world, why they are *so resistant to change* and how, ministering to the human family, they can promote the values of justice, harmony, the dignity and care of the poor and the wholeness of the human person and the integrity of creation.

The authoress does not judge there are any easy or definite answers, yet questions must be asked, however painful, so as to stimulate such institutions to be true to their original inspiration and their role within human society

The institution which she studies as an example for her larger concern and reflection, is one of India's premier medical institutions — the Christian Medical College, Vellore The motto given to the college by its foundress Ida Scudden is "Not to be Ministered unto but to Minister" — the very motto creates deep tensions These arise from the resources needed to maintain the high standard of *tertiary* medical care — is this at the expense of primary and community health care?, the Christian ethos and ghetto world of CMC in its self-*sufficiency — at the expense of awareness of* Vellore town, religious plurality, events like the Mandal Commission Report, Dalit atrocities, the ever expanding nature of the Institution and its long history and traditions — is it open to modernity and institutional change?, the medical Institution as related to the churches and their medical ministry — *is it providing medical personnel for other institutions?*, the excellence of the training given to doctors, nurses and *paramedical personnel — how many remain in India, absorb and live the hospital's motto?*; the institution which has achieved fina

from overseas funding agencies — at the expense of its motto 'to serve'? and how independent is it?

I was fascinated with the study — honest, fair, humble, appreciative, informative and challenging because Paterson asks respectful questions based on the Gospel, the needs of India, respect for technology and good medicine, a concern for the poor, admiration of the tradition and obvious achievements of CMC. She reflects as part of the CMC family and asks questions which all voluntary organizations/institutions have to face There are no simple answers and few either/or solutions As so often within the structures of modern society, the ways forward toward clearly defined goals inspired by the Gospel and the human concerns are "both/and" decisions and actions However the questions have to be listen to They rise from the changes in the socio-economic and cultural realities of life CMC spent 1991 evaluating itself and the process must continue

Groups responsible for and involved in medical institutions and other voluntary "service" industries (like education, social service/welfare/action) will read this with profit Medical personnel will find documented here the concerns, tensions and objectives they share

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

No Longer A Secret. The church and violence against women By Aruna GNANADASON Geneva. WCC Publications, 1993 Pp 79 $ 6.50 ISBN 2-8254-1098-5

This type of book makes clear to within men the hidden or *unconscious* attitudes they have towards women I was surprised how I share in an unconscious way many negative if not dangerous attitudes which could lead to covert types of violence, if not open.

lence to women and the amount of violence throughout the world. The growing awareness and recognition of the seriousness of the dehumanization of women has led to many types of movements which conscientize, resist, publicize and organize communitarian and legal support and redress. New laws are being passed or formulated.

Gnanadason then turns her attention to examine how the Church in her ministry responds to the "battered wife," sexual harassment and different types of exploitation and to problems of violence and harassment of women by Church personnel or in Church institutions. She notes the changes and yet the social conditioning of the Church's response to wives and women who are in various types of oppressive and dangerous situations.

She reflects on the theological challenges forced onto the Church in her praxis and her articulation of Christian self-understanding and the reading of the Bible A good book to awaken women and men to real problems and to guide them in searching for apt Christian responses.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Conversations on Counselling between a Doctor and a Priest. 3rd ed By Marcus Lefebure, O.P and Hans Schauder. Edinburgh. T & T Clark, 1990 Pp.xvii-226 £ 9 95 (pbk) ISBN 0-56-7291674-2

Every month hundreds of new books on psychology appear Even a quick scan of a *Psychology Today* issue will confirm this Much of this psychological literary output is highly repetitive and, by and large, not particularly profound Consequently it is a positive pleasure to come upon a book like this one which explores the connections between human relationship and spirituality. I must [illegible] me to take up his name. My life experience has been that books written by Dominicans are deep — and also lively. *Conversations on Counselling* is both! Fr Marcus Lefébure, O.P., is a Jewish Catholic priest who for many years was Catholic chaplain at the University of Edinburgh. The casting of the book and its main editing is his, I think. The book originated from conversations that he had with Dr Hans Schauder, a socially- involved psychiatrist. Dr Schauder is also Jewish (whether actually Catholic, I could not ascertain) and a deep and devout man. When such a priest and such a doctor meet to converse, one can expect something meaningful to emerge.

The literary genre of the book is the dialogue Of the eleven chapters in the book, nine record conversations between Lefébure and Schauder on a counselling theme. The first chapter, also a conversation — but between Dr Schauder and a social worker, here named 'Bridget' — puts forth the doctor's ideas on counselling and some of its implications as regards life and relationships. It is a kind of foundation for the themes discussed in the dialogues between the doctor and the priest

The book begins with 'Bridget' asking a simple question about how the doctor *prepares* for a session with a counsellee. At once we are launched into the deep, because the response indicates that to be prepared to really listen to *people implies a whole "general way of life" (p 1) which comes down to even such particulars as: "For example, I think it would be very disturbing if I allowed myself to indulge in a great deal of social gossip and uncontrolled talk or watch a television programme which lasts too long and so on"* (p. 2). Dr Schauder believes that "he who aims at becoming a counsellor must gradually acquire a balanced, disciplined, rather severe way of life" (*ibid.*). The [illegible] aims at enabling the

Whose Ministry? A Ministry of Health Care for the Year 2000. By Gillian PATERSON. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993. Pp. xi-120. $ 8.95 ISBN 2-8254-1118-3.

The ultimate concern of the book is the place of voluntary (Christian) institutions in today's world, why they are *so resistant to change* and how, ministering to the human family, they can promote the values of justice, harmony, the dignity and care of the poor and the wholeness of the human person and the integrity of creation

The authoress does not judge there are any easy or definite answers, yet questions must be asked, however painful, so as to stimulate such institutions to be true to their original inspiration and their role within human society

The institution which she studies as an example for her larger concern and reflection, is one of India's premier medical institutions — the Christian Medical College, Vellore The motto given to the college by its foundress Ida Scudden is "Not to be Ministered unto but to Minister" — the very motto creates deep tensions These arise from the resources needed to maintain the high standard of *tertiary* medical care — is this at the expense of primary and community health care?, the Christian ethos and ghetto world of CMC in its self-sufficiency — at the expense of awareness of Vellore town, religious plurality, events like the Mandal Commission Report, Dalit atrocities, the ever expanding nature of the Institution and its long history and traditions — is it open to modernity and institutional change?, the medical Institution as related to the churches and their medical ministry — is it providing medical personnel for other institutions?, the excellence of the training given to doctors, nurses and paramedical personnel — how many remain in India, absorb and live the hospital's motto?, the institution which has achieved financial independence from overseas funding agencies — at the expense of its motto 'to serve'? and how independent is it?

I was fascinated with the study — honest, fair, humble, appreciative, informative and challenging because Paterson asks respectful questions based on the Gospel, the needs of India, respect for technology and good medicine, a concern for the poor, admiration of the tradition and obvious achievements of CMC She reflects as part of the CMC family and asks questions which all voluntary organizations/institutions have to face There are no simple answers and few either/or solutions As so often within the structures of modern society, the ways forward toward clearly defined goals inspired by the Gospel and the human concerns are "both/and" decisions and actions However the questions have to be listen to They rise from the changes in the socio-economic and cultural realities of life CMC spent 1991 evaluating itself and the process must continue

Groups responsible for and involved in medical institutions and other voluntary "service" industries (like education, social service/welfare/action) will read this with profit Medical personnel will find documented here the concerns, tensions and objectives they share

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

No Longer A Secret. The church and violence against women By Aruna GNANADASON Geneva WCC Publications, 1993 Pp 79 $ 6 50 ISBN 2-8254-1098-5

This type of book makes clear to within men the hidden or unconscious attitudes they have towards women I was surprised how I share in an unconscious way many negative if not dangerous attitudes which could lead to covert types of violence, if not open.

The initial chapter brings the reader face to face with the many types of vio-

lence to women and the amount of violence throughout the world. The growing awareness and recognition of the seriousness of the dehumanization of women has led to many types of movements which conscientize, resist, publicize and organize communitarian and legal support and redress. New laws are being passed or formulated.

Gnanadason then turns her attention to examine how the Church in her ministry responds to the "battered wife," sexual harassment and different types of exploitation and to problems of violence and harassment of women by Church personnel or in Church institutions She notes the changes and yet the social conditioning of the Church's response to wives and women who are in various types of oppressive and dangerous situations.

She reflects on the theological challenges forced onto the Church in her praxis and her articulation of Christian self-understanding and the reading of the Bible A good book to awaken women and men to real problems and to guide them in searching for apt Christian responses

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Conversations on Counselling between a Doctor and a Priest. 3rd ed By Marcus LEFEBURE, O P and Hans SCHAUDER. Edinburgh. T & T Clark, 1990 Pp xvii-226 £ 9.95 (pbk) ISBN 0-56-7291674-2

Every month hundreds of new books on psychology appear Even a quick scan of a *Psychology Today* issue will confirm this. Much of this psychological literary output is highly repetitive and, by and large, not particularly profound. Consequently it is a positive pleasure to come upon a book like this one which explores the connections between human relationship and spirituality I must confess that what drew me to take up this book for review was the fact that one of the authors had an 'O P.' after his name. My life experience has been that books written by Dominicans are deep — and also lively. *Conversations on Counselling* is both! Fr Marcus Lefébure, O.P., is a Jewish Catholic priest who for many years was Catholic chaplain at the University of Edinburgh. The casting of the book and its main editing is his, I think. The book originated from conversations that he had with Dr Hans Schauder, a socially-involved psychiatrist. Dr Schauder is also Jewish (whether actually Catholic, I could not ascertain) and a deep and devout man. When such a priest and such a doctor meet to converse, one can expect something meaningful to emerge.

The literary genre of the book is the dialogue. Of the eleven chapters in the book, nine record conversations between Lefébure and Schauder on a counselling theme. The first chapter, also a conversation — but between Dr Schauder and a social worker, here named 'Bridget' — puts forth the doctor's ideas on counselling and some of its implications as regards life and relationships. It is a kind of foundation for the themes discussed in the dialogues between the doctor and the priest

The book begins with 'Bridget' asking a simple question about how the doctor *prepares* for a session with a counsellee. At once we are launched into the deep, because the response indicates that to be prepared to really listen to people implies a whole "general way of life" (p 1) which comes down to even such particulars as: "For example, I think it would be very disturbing if I allowed myself to indulge in a great deal of social gossip and uncontrolled talk or watch a television programme which lasts too long and so on" (p. 2). Dr Schauder believes that "he who aims at becoming a counsellor must gradually acquire a balanced, disciplined, rather severe way of life" (*ibid.*). The counselling process aims at enabling the person who comes for counselling "to

gain a vision of life in its completeness, in its fullness, in its reality." (p. 18) Along with this, the process will help the person to establish" *growing points* ... where she will find new resources and strength so far undiscovered" (*ibid.*) This is not all. "I want to achieve practical results" (p 19) In other words, something must take place in the client that leads her to action by the use of a responsible freedom This process can be divided into seven stages, but for the purposes of this review I remain content with the broad stroke of the brush given in the few previous sentences

With this as a background and foundation, *Dialogue 2 Counselling and the Archetype of the Human Dialogue* begins the actual conversations between the psychiatrist and the priest This book invites reflective reading even as it generates inward enthusiasm for the truth it witnesses to I am not going to attempt to summarize each of the dialogues in this review, I shall just mention the titles — hoping that these plus what was said above might move the seriously inquisitive seeker to 'take up and read' this very humanistic volume *Relationship and Solitude, The Stages of the Spiritual Path Stages of Counselling in Relation to Stages of the Spiritual Path, Counselling and Creativity, Backwards and Forwards, Personality and Power, Growth and Morality, Sex and Contemplation* Each of these dialogues is preceded by a quote or quotes which are *both koan* and *mashal* in relation to the matter discussed

I really cannot recommend this book too highly It is so full of wisdom, of life experience, of philosophy, theology and the humanities. Perhaps the best and truest thing I can say about this book is that it is a deeply human word spoken by two wonderful men (and 'Bridget'!) who care sincerely for their fellow humans It will be not only enlightening and inspiring, but I think strengthening and encouraging as well

(If the more sensitive reader has found him/herself pulled up a times by my use of gender, the book does a bit of the same But this will go on for the next fifty years at least, so we might as well accept it!)

'Dialogue' 11, *The Open End* gives a zen-touch to all the preceding it is a blank page — a symbol of 'continuation' — and for those who are familiar with zen, of 'return to the market place' Fr Lefébure then concludes the book with *Concluding Postscript on Counselling and Friendship* (In the table of contents, there are mistakes in pagination *The Open End* is p 215 not 205, and the *Counselling Postscript* begins on p 216 There is also an Index of Works Cited, pp 222-226 In the quotation from John Macmurray which faces the contents page, I am not sure if what seems mistaken Latin is such or is it intended?)

ROMAN LEWICKI, S J.

The Constitution of the Society of Jesus Part VII Missioning By Antonio M DE ALDAMA, S J Anand Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1990 Pp xi-202. Rs 45

This is the first volume of his commentary on the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* that Fr de Aldama wrote The work covers Part VII of the Constitutions, which bears the title, *Missioning* The matter that this part covers includes the 'missions' that the Society receives from the Holy Father and the way of responding to them and the means that are proper to the Society of Jesus in fulfilling the missions given its members by the Pope or by their own superiors This part of the *Constitutions* has its origins in some notes that St Ignatius made 'concerning mission' in 1544/45. For the Jesuit's founder 'mission' has a special — one might say a 'technical' — meaning, which looks to the sending of the apostle St Ignatius had called himself 'the pilgrim', and Fr Jerome Nadal, one of the early companions of Ignatius, wrote that "the great aim of the Society consists not so much in living in

houses and therefrom helping the city or town or even the neighbouring villages, as in being engaged in pilgrimages undertaken through a mission from the Holy Father or from our own Superiors to help souls anywhere, on any occasion, in any way . ." (p. 11). As this passage indicates, one is *sent* (by order of the Pope or a Superior) on an apostolic journey. De Aldama is aware that *mission* has other and quite different meanings today, however his interest is to make clear what that term meant for Ignatius and the *Constitutions* he composed This accords with our author's aim of producing an *exegetical* commentary (p x) "I want to find out what Ignatius actually meant to say in each one of the passages we shall study " A necessary undertaking, because lack of knowledge leads latter-day Jesuits to pass off "arbitrary constructions as genuine interpretations of Ignatius's 'mind'" (*ibid*)

Fr de Aldama works from original manuscripts and he has a well-honed critical sense The historically inclined reader will derive much intellectual pleasure from reading this book. For the latter-day Jesuit the examples that illustrate almost each point in the text will open up often unknown family treasures These will, perhaps, also be the main interest for non-Jesuit readers because so many — all, really — deal with that much talked about but elusive topic of the 'apostolate' There is no apostolate without an apostle. Perhaps a reading of this book may help us to taste once again what it means *to be sent* "The preacher is not a philosopher expounding an ideological system .. He is a messenger, a 'witness', in the biblical sense of the word. 'you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth'" (p. 140).

Fr de Aldama now gives his witness by cheerfully bearing a total blindness. Fr Ignacio Echaniz and Gujarat Sahitya Prakash deserve our unreserved gratitude for the translation and Indian edition of this monument of spiritual scholarship.

An excellent production will be enhanced by noting the following: p. 17, line 7 'preachig' should be 'preaching'; p 20, line 6, 'of' should be 'or'; p. 114, line 28, in the sentence "To represent," the citation should be (cf [292. .etc.]) instead of ([cf. 292..]); p. 128, line 5. 'It' should be 'I', p 141, line 1 'no much' should be 'not much', p 175, para 4, line 2 'whem' should be 'when'; p 180, line 8, 'than' should be 'that', p 183, line 3 'pro-perly' should be 'properly', p 193 second last line of text "es-tablish" should be 'establish'

ROMAN LEWICKI, S.J.

Be Human Be Holy. By C P VARKEY, S J Bombay· St Paul's, 1994. Pp. 205 Rs 60 ISBN 81-7109-204-7.

This is a good book for spiritual reading Fr Varkey (C P to his friends) has many years of experience in education and more recently as counsellor and spiritual guide. His training in India, France and the USA has given him first-hand knowledge of a wide range of the human family He draws much from his experience with people no less than from his reading in psychology and spirituality He sums up the main issue of spirituality in his title "Be Human Be Holy "

He begins with the Ayodhya conflict and laments that religion should be a source of hatreds. He then shows the meaning of spirituality in relation to religion and religiosity The other three parts of the book dwell on various aspects of the themes of love, wisdom and inner freedom. The twenty-three chapters are relatively short, easy to grasp in one session of spiritual reading, and reflect a balanced modern outlook. There are many references specially to the Bible and Vatican II. As such the book is addressed to Catholics, but others also will find in it much food for thought and guidance for spiritual growth. The style is easy and anecdotal.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Vol. LVIII SEPTEMBER 1994 No. 9

VJTR 58 (1994) 545-558

Chastity as Total Consecration to Service

Aloysius PIERIS, S.J.

Well-known Fr Pieris of the Tulana Research Centre (Gonawala, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka) reflects on the meaning of chastity in the perspective of the NT spirituality of freedom and service. He reflects on how Jesus lived his chastity as single-minded dedication to God's Kingdom, a chastity that in no way diminished his humanity. Pieris criticises aberrations that easily grow around the religious vow and pleads for a new atmosphere and an ecclesial community imbued with the spirit of the beatitudes were chastity may flower as a rose of service rather than a lily of purity

The Rose Garden Church

"Are you, perhaps, the man who is canvassing for a Rose Garden Church?" These more or less were the words with which the late Archbishop Roberts greeted me when I introduced myself to him at his residence in London some twenty or more years ago. I was fumbling for an answer as I did not understand the question. Then he picked up a few issues of *Outlook*, a slender Sri Lankan Catholic journal published by a concerned group of lay people during the first post-conciliar decade. The editor, an admirer of the Archbishop, had been sending him complimentary copies of the journal. It was only when I saw him shuffling them in his hands, that I guessed what he was alluding to: an article of mine which had appeared there; its title was "From Lilies to Roses."

In the late sixties, when I noticed that the post-conciliar renewal was losing its momentum due to confusion and inertia in our local church, I started writing small satirical pieces in that journal in an effort to spell out, in lighter vein, the new paradigms required to understand and even welcome the tur-

bulent climate that prevailed in the Church. Renewal, unlike reform, is a costly process which takes a long time to manifest its fruits. Since the fruit of conciliar renewal was not as immediately evident as the cost of renewal, those Catholics who had no sense of hope panicked like the disciples caught in the storm (Mk 4:40). They were of little faith.

Now, chastity, both celibate and conjugal, turned out to be an area of painful confusion at that time, as it perhaps is even today. Priests and Religious — those idols of organized holiness, venerated in lofty niches of celibate glory — crashed on the floor, trying to leap down to their freedom! Had they been allowed to walk on solid ground with their feet of clay like the rest of mortals, they might not have fallen, in the first place. At any rate, the fragments were immediately swept out of the sanctuary.

Christian marriage also had its share of crisis. In the birth-control debate triggered off by *Humanae Vitae*, sexual intimacy gradually ceased to be the 'secondary end of marriage' or a mere *remedium concupiscentiae*, and rose to a status even more respectable than 'procreation', which used to be known as the primary end.

The Church atmosphere seemed heavily charged with carnal concerns Maybe these issues appear trivial when compared to the clerical scandals of the present decade, but they sent shock waves in the late sixties and the early seventies; and I thought I had an obligation, as priest and a religious, to explain the situation to the average believer. And so I invented an epigram into which I could compress my own reading of those events: *The Church is growing roses on the debris of decaying lilies.*[1]

From Lilies to Roses

The Asian lily is an unblemished piece of beauty, never sullied by the mire in which it blooms Unfadingly pale in its sepulchral whiteness, it maintains an angelic aloofness from humans and exudes an aroma of apathy towards all things around. The rose, on the other hand, blossoms on a brier that bristles with thorns, it cuddles together flesh coloured petals that are warmly human in their fragile beauty, and exhales an enduring fragrance even with its last dying breath

"Lilies will all fade away into roses!" A self-centered ha-

[1] Aloysius Pieris, "From Lilies to Roses," *Outlook*, 3/6, December 1970 & January 1971, p 6

rassment of the flesh would yield place to a service-oriented discipline of the self. That was my message to the churches. It was a prediction prompted, of course, by what I witnessed: Christian men and women, married and celibate, chastening their chastity in the furnace of human love.[2] Perhaps it was hope parading as prophecy! I was certainly dreaming of a Rose Garden Church.

Archbishop Roberts seemed amused by the metaphor because he was sceptical about my prediction. He knew how far the Bark of Peter was capable of changing its course; after all, he had served in it as a high-ranking crew-member. But he would not dampen my enthusiasm. Nor have my hopes ceased to haunt me. In fact, I have already shared this dream with others in my autobiographical essay on the vows.[3]

Forced Chastity and Opted Chastity

The noted Indian iconoclast Ramaswamy Periyar from Tamil Nadu, a great political reformer of this century, was also a great dreamer. He had the audacity to question the worth of uxorial chastity as prescribed in the Hindu jurisprudential literature and as personified in Sita of the Indian epic Ramayana or her equivalents in other popular narratives He repudiated every brand of chastity that is 'forced upon' women by a brahmanic-patriarchal society (*nirpande karpu*) and advocated a chastity defined and 'determined freely' by women themselves (*suvecchai karpu*).[4] This distinction is helpful not only for women but for all of us who may be carrying a burden not freely chosen by us. The principle implied here is universally valid.

I have made a similar distinction in the notion of poverty, taking God's Reign as the one and only valid criterion of discernment. When voluntarily embraced in view of God's Reign, poverty amounts to the evangelical *freedom* that Jesus proposed in the beatitude; when imposed on the many by the greed of the wasteful few, poverty is downright *slavery* and is rightly called structural sin.[5]

[2]*Ibid*, p. 7

[3]Aloysius PIERIS, "Three Ingredients of Authentic Humanism· An Autobiographical Essay on the Religious Vows" *VJTR* 56/1 (Jan 1992), pp 3-22; *The Month*, February 1992, pp. 73-78 (Part I) and March 1992, pp. 114-121 (Part II).

[4]See Gabriele DIETRICH, *Women's Movement in India. Conceptual and Religious Reflections* Bangalore: Breakthrough Publications, 1988.

[5]Aloysius PIERIS, "To be poor as Jesus was poor?" *The Way*, 24 (Summer 1984), pp 186-197 Reprinted as Ch. 2 in A. PIERIS, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, Or[illegible] Bo[illegible] New Y[illegible]k 1988[illegible], 15-23

This distinction holds good with regard to any other burden we humans may be carrying, including ritual, legal and sexual purity. Is it a form of 'slavery' which desecrates God's shrine which we are? Or is it a 'service' rendered in the freedom of spirit, which amounts to an act of true worship? In fact, the play on the words 'worship,' 'voluntary service' and 'forced labour' — expressed by the same verbal root, *abd*, in Hebrew — is crucial to our understanding of the intimate bond that exists between the ministry or service we render in view of God's Reign and the purity or chastity required by the beatitudinal spirituality proper to that same Reign of God. This, in fact, is the thesis I am going to build up in the following pages.

Search for a Biblical Framework

I tend to see biblical spirituality in general as a two-fold struggle. The first is the struggle to eliminate any kind of slavery imposed on humans by other humans. Such slavery, according to God's Word, is the fruit of *idolatry* All gods other than Yahweh create slave-societies of one kind or another. Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Greece and Rome, and even Israel since Solomon (as also the Church since Constantine) have been guilty of this structural sin. The second is the struggle to embrace the *true cult of Yahweh* which coincides with the covenantal obligation to 'slave lovingly' for one another, specially for the weak ones. In other words, 'voluntary service' (rather than a mere demand for one's rights) is a sure means of justice, just as 'forced labour' is an enthronement of injustice.[6]

Bastian Wielenga has shown how the various nuances of the Hebrew verb *abd* (work, serve, slave, worship) help bring out the axial narrative of the Bible. Yahweh invites all slaves (*abd*) to leave their 'house of bondage' (*abd*) that they may freely worship (*abd*) their Maker and Redeemer within a covenantal programme which consists of working (*abd*) over God's creation and voluntarily slaving for, that is, lovingly serving (*abd*) one's fellows, specially the powerless ones who are slaves (*abd*) crying to Yahweh for freedom.[7]

In sum: to love God in one another is to serve God in one another; and to serve God in one another is to worship God!

[6]About the priority of 'voluntary service' (convenantal obligation) over the human rights approach, see my "Three Inadequacies in the Social Encyclicals," *VJTR* 57/2 (Feb. 1993), specially, pp. 90-94.

[7]Bastian WIELENGA, *Biblical Perspectives on Labour*, Madurai. TTS, 1982, and *Labour Serving God or Mammon*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1987

"To love and to serve" — the Ignatian shorthand for Christian spirituality — says it all.

In Jesus God exemplifies this new arrangement by taking the 'form of a slave' and accepting 'death, even on the cross' — a mode of execution reserved for criminals of the slave class, the *humiliores* (Phil 2:2-11) — but not before washing the feet of his disciples in the manner of a slave (Jn 13:5-11) and bidding them also do the same (Jn 13:12-17), so that the Fellowship Meal of Thanksgiving which he left behind would ever call to memory that it is Yahweh, the 'God of Slaves' who has freed us through Jesus, the 'Slave of God' (*Ebed Yahweh*).

The Divine Slave that Bears away our Impurities

Whoever is familiar with this biblical background does not take long to pick up the Second Testament's comforting message: that Jesus willingly and joyfully takes upon himself the burden of impurity that humiliates us so that we might cease to be slaves of conventional purity! He expects us, too, to take a basin of water and cleanse one another of the dirt and the dust we accumulate during our fellowship-journeys to one another's home.

Note, for instance, how the burden of uncleanliness forced upon the leper was removed when Jesus lovingly touched the untouchable (Mt 8.3) He made himself unclean in the act of cleansing that leper. "Who touched *me*?" Jesus asked the crowd once (Lk 8:45). "Someone has touched *me*!" he reiterated (Lk 8:46), thus drawing everybody's attention to the fact that someone regarded as a doubly unclean person — a woman, who was also afflicted by incessant bleeding — was not touching merely his clothes. He seemed to tease the pure ones of Israel: You can now call me, too, impure; I *am* now one of these whom you find repulsive!

Jesus' purity consisted of becoming impure in solidarity with those who were despised as a pollutant and polluted species of sub-humans. That was his way of removing the label of impurity from persons, actions and things.

Watch now the prostitute approach him. All eyes on her, and her eyes on him! She crosses the Rubicon of propriety and touches his body ('she had loved much'), washes it with her tears and wipes it with her hair, kisses it and anoints it with what is preciously peculiar to her unclean profession: perfumes (Lk 7:37-38). How could this man be a prophet? (Lk 7:39). They

have doubts about his chastity. Yet he continued to practise commensality with the unclean (Lk 8:34; Mt 11:19), knowing that it defiled him in the eyes of all.

He even went so far as to teach that God's Reign was like a party given to all but enjoyed only by the rejected ones in society who have the time and the will to attend it (Lk 14:15-24). What scandalized the pure was that in the company of the unclean, the divine host was also a willing guest (Lk 19:7)!

Jesus treated the legal prudes as slave-drivers who loaded others with burdens which they themselves would not carry (Lk 11:46). It is they who drew the purity—pollution line and maintained the rules of segregation. But Jesus warned them that their side of the boundary line was not quite where God felt at home, and that the contaminated ones — the harlots — had better prospects of being with God (Mt 21:31b). Indeed, how pure are the pure who do not have God in their midst?

In his satirical parable about the man wounded and robbed on the road to Jerico (Lk 10:25-37), *the observers of the law of purity* are shown to be cowards who fear contamination from the blood of the victim and, therefore, evade the sight and the touch of the broken one who is desperately in need of love and care, by contrast, the impure outsider from Samaria, who is *fortunate enough not to be bound by any law or vow of purity*, seems endowed with an enviable freedom to love "Go and do the same " Purity in the Gospel of Jesus is freedom to love and to serve. The Lawyer is instructed to emulate the impure wayfarer's example of loving service

Chastity and the One Mission

In the parable just cited, Jesus has expounded a subtle treatise on the slavery of the pure and the freedom enjoyed by the unclean This general rule must now be seen in connection with *chastity*, which is usually defined as the purity required in the domain of affective relationship and sexuality. It, too, must be seen as a mode of loving service rather than merely in negative terms of purity and pollution.

The drama enacted in the fourth chapter of the fourth gospel (Jn 4.4-41) could be instructive here As the curtain rises a 'loose' woman from an allegedly polluted social group is shown to be engaged in an intimate conversation with Jesus by the side of a well. A Hebrew audience would immediately grasp the implication of the setting, their tradition has taught them to

associate well-side scenes with romances that invariably culminate in marriage!

In fact, the drama ends with an allusion to a marital reunion. Samaria's alienation from the cult of Yahweh serves as the historical background to this scene. Here, the clever pun on the word *baal* (husband/lord/god, sir,) is lost in the Greek text where Jesus is addressed as *Kyrie* (Sir, Lord) while the husband is referred to as 'man' (*aner*). The Hebrew/Aramaic pun helps the 'playwright' to evince that Miss Samaria who has served several successive spouses is, at last, able to get back to her first love! She becomes free again.

The script-writer also makes a mischievous allusion to the shock and suspicion with which the apostles greet the well-side dialogue (Jn 4:27). For, the plot revolves round Jesus, the true lover. He would walk into any situation or make use of any occasion to offer the Water of Life. His meat, the writer explains, is to accomplish that task. He hungers for nothing else (Jn 4.34). The whole of him is oriented to that one mission. This *single-mindedness* is his chastity, a far cry from the kind of chastity that the Apostles could have been thinking of when they raised their eyebrows at what was going on by the well!

Single-mindedness

Whoever has prayerfully reflected over all the aforementioned words and deeds of Jesus is bound to revise his or her understanding and practice of chastity. Many questions have to be asked. Who has defined my chastity for me? Is it someone else's burden that I am made to carry? Or is there an evangelical brand of chastity which would require of me to incur the conventional stigma of impurity in order to bring about the purity of heart that the beatitudes speak of? Must I not admire those men and women who were honest enough to make this option, so that today we can speak about an alternative model of chastity with a frankness that they alone have introduced into Church circles?

More positively: Can Jesus once more be allowed to be my sole guide, and not, say, the ascetical tradition which has given birth to a separate vow of chastity? Does not Jesus' own chastity belong to an order which is not commensurate with the biological, emotional, ascetical, legal or ritual standards that we have invented to measure the degree of carnal adulteration our souls may undergo at a given moment? Was not his order of

values derived entirely from his one and only mission, namely, his anti-slavery campaign which he himself defined in his Nazareth manifesto with words borrowed from Isaiah: *the mission to free the captives*?

Should I not then repeatedly renew my baptismal commitment to this same mission of Christ? The day I was baptized, I promised through my proxy to carry absolutely no burden other than my covenantal responsibility to work tirelessly for this mission, renouncing gladly any pleasure or pain as a useless burden *if* it is a hindrance to that end, and embracing every agony and ecstasy that is not alien to it This is the 'principle and foundation' of Christian freedom, and therefore, the basis of every authentic spirituality, as Ignatius proposes in his *Spiritual Exercises* (No. 23). Such single-minded orientation of my whole being to this mission, the total consecration of myself to this service, is chastity. All else is slavery

Thus chastity derives its meaning only from the mission to change the slave-economy that disrupts the proper 'order' (*nomos*) of the world which is God's own 'household' (*oikos*), that is to say, chastity is the consecration of ourselves to usher in the '*economy*' of salvation, which is literally a proper management of this world as God's own household [8]

The Christian family — be it the natural family or the canonically erected family ('religious life') — is called to embody this form of economy, that is to say, Christ's new order of cosmic and human relationships, so that the whole Household of God — the church and the world — may gradually accept the new economy That alone is the *raison d'être* of chastity. Neither the ascetical struggle for a state of perfection nor the stoic ideal of apathy is a worthy motive for being chaste. This is why we must constantly refer back to Jesus, the celibate, and to his zeal for God's Household.

Jesus our Sole Guide

Jesus remained a layperson and a celibate, not unlike his precursor. But before we appropriate him as the prototype of the consecrated person of our own day, we must note a few significant characteristics of his personality.

First of all, his life-style differed from the Baptizer's in dress, diet and demeanour. His attire, his behaviour and his food hab-

[8] See Robert G. SIMON, "Church and Economy: Some Doctrinal Perspectives," *Pacifica*, 6/3, October 1993, pp 311ff

its were that of the ordinary person on the street. He was no stoic or superman who felt his ego blown full whenever he could exhibit complete mastery over human emotions and passions. Jesus was a normal man, as sensitive and susceptible to the inner stirrings of his heart as any other human.

Besides, Jesus was not ashamed of publicly acknowledging his feelings or manifesting his emotions. He had special friends among both men and women, whose company he openly sought and enjoyed (Jn 11:3.5; 13:23). His affection for Lazarus became the talk of the town after he broke down at the funeral house (Jn 11:35-36). He created quite a scene, behaving like a mad man when he lost his temper in the temple (Mt 21:12; Jn 2:15). Did he not also sweat blood when fear overtook him at Gethsemane (Lk 22:44)? Were not his emotions strong enough to register their effect physically on his body: tears, sweat, blood?

Moreover, he loved to eat and drink, and earned quite a reputation for it: "a glutton and a drunkard" always in the bad company of "publicans and sinners" (Mt 11:19; Lk 7:33). It is from him that we learn for the first time the kind of "Christian sensuality" usually associated with Francis of Assisi — a eucharistic enjoyment of God's creation. Stoicism is certainly not what Jesus practised or taught; it is what we imported into our Christian practice!

In fact it is the puritans who called him a glutton and a drunkard. His spirituality is not meant for prudes but for 'the pure of heart' who see God in all things and all things in God. In the eyes of the latter — whom Jesus called 'blessed' — the world is the Garden of Delight which the creator wished them to enjoy. In their single-minded commitment to Christ's mission of turning this world into a new heaven and a new earth, the true household of God, they are capable of having a foretaste of redemption. This single-mindedness is their chastity or the 'purity of heart' that Jesus advertized as a sure cure for unhappiness, that is to say, a beatitude (Mt 5:8).

The detachment Jesus demanded from his disciples was not a stoic asceticism but a non-addictive (i.e., non-consumerist) enjoyment of God's creation.[9] Chastity, as the single-minded enthusiasm for God, and whole-hearted participation in God's mission to break free every bond that alienates us from creation, is the only possible way to relish God in all things. The ability to enjoy God's gifts is itself the gift of chastity.

[9] I have developed this thesis at length in the article cited in note 3 above.

Chastity in God's Household

This premised, we can ask ourselves: Would Jesus have renounced marriage for any motive other than the need to be free to accomplish his mission? Marriage, like all human institutions, must be relativized before the demands of God's Reign. Nothing is absolute save God's loving and freeing presence in the world. The married people who joined his company were not forced to renounce marital life and conjugal intimacy but only invited to re-order all of it in terms of the one thing necessary: [the pleasant obligation to usher in] the Reign of Love. To let anything else serve as the supreme value in one's life (idolatry) would detract from the purity of the Christian vocation (adultery). It would be unchaste.

Leave father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife and children. Yes, none of them is absolute. The Reign of God is. Parents, spouses and children must now enter the new order of kinship based on 'hearing the word and keeping it' (Mk 4:34). The first to enter this new order was his own mother. Her breasts which nursed him had no claims over the Word which nourished her from the moment she welcomed it into her body (Lk 1:38 and 11:27-28) She is blessed because she treasured in her heart that difficult Word about his Son's all absorbing 'Father's business' (Lk 2 48-52). She learnt thus to replace all biological ties with the bond of discipleship, becoming the first member of the new family of Jesus. She had no other business than the 'Father's business'. That was her chastity

Chastity, then, is this single-minded devotion to the one task which we are all summoned to undertake. In and through Jesus who is our covenant with Yahweh, our whole being, our joys and sorrows, our pleasures and pains, our agonies and ecstasies, will have their origin, their growth and their culmination in the coming of a new order of human freedom and love.

This covenant of loving service or willing slavery (*abd*) is a burden which is light, a yoke that is sweet. Chastity is none other than the lightness of this burden and the sweetness of this yoke, embraced with enthusiasm, and enjoyed with child-like simplicity Chastity then is not a pallid lily, but a passionate rose!

Chastity in Religious Life

The three vows are just one of many ways of spelling out our baptismal consecration. Obedience is the worship (*abd*) of

'Yahweh alone' within a community of mutual love and service (*abd*). Poverty which is freedom derived from obedience, consists of throwing away all burdens imposed by other gods. Thus obedience ('Yahweh alone') and evangelical poverty ('no other god') are two ways of formulating the same covenantal commitment. The love and fidelity (a distinguishing mark of Yahweh) expected also of the human partners of the covenant, is named chastity. In other words, chastity is the joyous single-mindedness and enthusiastic whole-heartedness which characterize obedience and poverty; it is not a separate quality or a vow.[10]

There is an embarrassing question that has always given rise to a crisis of vocation among the Religious since Vatican II: Does this way of understanding the vows make religious life superfluous? By force of our baptismal consecration (which can be expressed in terms of the three vows), are we not *all* called to acquire the 'new kinship with Jesus', to be his father, mother, brother, sister, on the basis of 'hearing the word and keeping it'? What then is unique about religious life?

This question can be answered only by raising a counter-question. Could religious life claim any legitimacy from the gospels without proving itself to be a sacrament rather than a caricature of this new family of Jesus? If it fails to prove its legitimacy, would it not easily make itself redundant?

In loosely organized Christian sects and in fringe groups of institutionalized churches, we see the baptized community as a whole attempting to live this commitment. The more organized a church tends to be, the less insistent it is on this radical commitment of the baptized. Juridical and administrative preoccupations dry up the charismatic and pastoral springs of continuous renewal. When that happens, a *vicarious group* takes over the vocation of the entire community.

Was that not, in fact, the proximate *origin* of religious life in the Church?

Such 'specialization' by one group results in a gradual alienation of that group from the total community. This may bring with it serious limitations in the understanding of the common vocation, as the group begins to absorb the mannerisms of the Church's own institutional government instead of becoming a challenge to it. Obedience, for instance, contracts into an *ascetical submission of one's will to a human ruler*, rather than a communal listening to God's summons; poverty is emptied of its true meaning and becomes a euphemism for *corporate ownership of wealth*; and

[10]As explained in the article cited in note 3 above.

chastity easily degenerates into an *obsessive concern with one's sexuality*, a burden that turns its bearer into a slave.

Has this not been the *history* of religious life in the Church?

Once the beatitudes have ceased to make sense in a Jesus' Community, and the purity of heart appears to be an unrealizable dream, then compensation is sought by re-introducing various forms of slavery from which Yahweh has delivered us, and re-imposing burdens which Jesus had once and for all lifted from our backs: ascetical practices of self-perfection; subservience to purity-pollution laws; artificial community observances that have no bearing on the mission entrusted to us by Jesus; the futile struggle for perfection in 'formal prayer' as a burdensome substitute for the authentically evangelical spirituality of hearing and keeping God's Word or seeking and doing God's will; and so on.

Is this not the *downfall* of religious life?

Not a Bed of Roses

The alternative Christian view of chastity, which I have proposed here, is really the traditional one and it presupposes a return to the original model of Christian community: Jesus' new family (of married and unmarried disciples) bound together by the Spirit of the Beatitudes. Therefore, I wish to express a well founded fear: this alternative brand of chastity, which I am dreaming of, here, will create its own caricature, as explained below, if we try to practise it in the present ecclesiastical set-up where the beatitudinal spirituality of Jesus is set aside as utopian for men and women caught up in the acqumulation-consumerism cycle. The alternative view of chastity presupposes an alternative community both in the natural family and in religious life. Lilies and roses cannot grow on the same soil!

No doubt, alternative communities of men and women — both married and single — which have sprung up today in the fringes of the institutional Church, marginal even to the canonically recognized institutes of religious life, are in the process of redefining the nature of Jesus' communities in categories that are entirely new. If the Church law has no slot to take them in, they may survive in the periphery, since any bargain for ecclesiastical recognition within the current legal framework would also be their eventual demise.

Such is the verdict of history as the Dominican Canonist Mark Said sees it. According to him, the arrival of an all-perva-

sive 'general (canon) law' in the Church in the second decade of this century seems to have eliminated the free role that the 'particular law' played in the previous two centuries in fostering a spontaneous growth of religious life; the universal canon law partly contributed to the arrest of this growth during this century.[11]

Archbishop Roberts was right. The Church is not going to be one big bed of roses! The chastity that we are dreaming of can flourish only in an ethos of freedom that our baptismal vows of poverty and obedience alone can produce; for, chastity is none other than the single-mindedness in the practice of obedience ("Yahweh alone") and evangelical poverty ("no other god").

Towards a Chaste Church

If practised out of this context, that is to say, if treated as a virtue or a vow *per se*, chastity is bound to produce its own twofold aberration: a carnal obsession with *sexual purity* which goes hand in hand with a carnal obsession with *sexual pleasure*. These are two faces of the same monster, as the history of religious life has amply illustrated.[12] Each is a cult of a god that has set itself against Yahweh's sovereignty. Each is a form of slavery. Each of them accounts for the other's existence. Each is a denial of love. That, in fact, is a visibly distressing aspect of the spiritual crisis of our times.

Asian Christianity tends to vitiate marital, presbyterial and religious life with an 'individualist asceticism' whereas Euro-American Christianity seems to have accommodated 'liberal individualism' within the spirituality of conjugal, clerical and 'consecrated' life. In either case, Christianity has risked losing its taste for beatitudinal freedom and becoming a fertile soil for the growth of a *narcissistic chastity* that does not glow with the ardour of charity, or a *self-indulgent hedonism* that mocks at the Christian imperatives of 'love and service'. Such a species of Christianity could hardly produce the alternative kind of chastity we are dreaming of. The Lefebvrist restoration of encratism, on the one hand, and the recent scandals of sex-abuse in high places, on the other, amply illustrate this thesis.

[11]Mark SAID, "The Role of Particular Law of the Institutes in the Renewal of Consecrated Life," Part I, *UISIG Bulletin*, 44 (Second Quarter 1977), pp. 13-26.

[12]I have illustrated this with examples in "Religious vows and the reign of God," *The Way Supplement*, 65 (Summer 1989), pp. 13-14.

To what, then, would I compare such Christianity? Perhaps to a sludgy soil in which the lily plant spreads like a weed and the rose shrub rots at its root! For, the lily of purity cannot thrive except in the mire of self-indulgence — the very soil in which the rose of love and service decomposes into lust and slavery! Only on a soil where lilies decay could roses thrive.

Roses among Thorns

Stations of the Cross. A Latin American Pilgrimage By Dorothee Soelle. Trasl by Joyce Irwin. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993 Pp xi-146. $ 9 00. ISBN 0-8006-2688-5

Recently many "celebrated" the so-called discovery of Latin America and others bemoaned its rape Commenting on this event Soelle says "Five hundred years ago over America there lay a large bedcover This cover offered protection and warmth for the many peoples who were born and died under it, gathered gold and harvested fruit, built cities and laid water pipes In 1492 the cover was ripped away, and an unending rape and annihilation of the peoples, their cultures, and their natural landscapes began The cover was torn to pieces, and the discovery has recently been celebrated five hundred years later, by those who profited and profit from it" (p ix)

She herself made a two and half months "pilgrimage" through seven Latin American countries — a different type of discovery which she describes in these words "There is a second discovery of Latin America, running counter to this, one that analyzes the misery produced by the discoverers The facts and figures that we regard as 'objective' are familiar to many people and are spread through the media, though often without indications of the causes The reaction of the rich to this exposition of calamity is anything but sympathy, willingness to change, or strategies to reverse the process On the whole the reaction is defensiveness, habituation, indifference, desensitization Who wants to suffocate from the misery of someone else? This characteristic coldness of our successful culture turns backward into the psyche of the individual" (p ix)

This book is an account of her experiences with people in different situations, listening to their stories — stories of such diverse types of human pain and hope Soelles writes "I tried to discover stories of liberation from the violence which dominates everything The true story of freedom is a story of freedom from violence in a double sense of spaces in life which are free of violence and of methods of creating them which are themselves free of violence. Now, months later, I think that it was for the sake of this story that I traveled around Out of a kind of spiritual hunger To share and renew this memory with others who live in the same tradition of faith is the greatest enrichment that has been given me" (p x)

How to convey these 'stations' in the journey of life of women belonging to the indigenous people whose children or husbands have who work in shoe factories or among cabbages, raise families in slums, and of children on Brazil's streets, youth in prison, murdered youth leaders ? Soelle tells stories of real people, describes movements seeking alleviation of suffering and injustice speaks of base community experiences, of governmental deceptions, of violence and injustice and offers some stories of extraordinary people

Here we have simple, deep and authentic contextual theology and a guide to realistic Christian spirituality A book worth reading

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

VJTR 58 (1994) 559-572

An Emerging Indian Theology. II

Some Exploratory Reflections

M. AMALADOSS, S.J.

After uncovering the approaches characteristic of Indian theology last month, the author offers a synthetic presentation of themes that have been reflected on: the world as an organic whole, a humanity that is never totally alienated from God but lives by the Divine Reality, sin being looked at as a cosmic rather than personal mystery, and God as immanent and Trinitarian. And in the practical line, liberation as integral, including the spiritual growth, dialogue as an end, not a means, the Church as relating ambiguously to culture. Behind these themes there is a vision of the mystery of God that is universal, a mission of the Church characterised by a humble service to make all things new, and a Christ and a Paschal Mystery that are cosmic and available to all peoples in different ways that escape our understanding.

Any reflection on religious experience is guided or conditioned by the way we look at the world, at ourselves and at God The traditional terms for these are Cosmology, Anthropology and Theology. Our approach to these realities is determined by a certain cultural orientation. This may be spelt out into a philosophy, but may often remain implicit. One of the difficulties for Indian theology is that, together with the traditional theology, we have inherited also a world-view. In former days it was taken for granted that scholastic philosophy had a privileged place in undergirding the official theological reflection. Today, in the context of pluralism both in philosophy and theology, the situation is more complex and unclear. In the following pages, my aim is not to introduce a systematic treatise. I am reacting to some elements of a traditional world-view that still seems to underlie at least official theological reflection. Sometimes I may seem to caricature the traditional point of view. I wish I were only reacting to a phantasm.

The criticisms levelled against the emerging Indian theology often involve unconscious, taken-for-granted presuppositions. Unless we take the argument to that level, no real clarification will occur. A characteristic of unconscious presuppositions is our tendency to deny them when they emerge into conscious-

ness. If unconscious presuppositions can be clarified there could be an open and mutually beneficial dialogue. It will then be so much better for Indian theology to be evaluated and challenged as it is, rather than to be seen through coloured spectacles and misunderstood. I do not claim that the Indian perspective I am suggesting is actually operative consciously and everywhere. But indications of it can be seen here and there. Taking this as a starting point, I shall also be prospective, indicating directions in which we could explore and move further.

Looking at the World

Traditional theology looks at the world as out there. It is assumed that the theology of creation requires a separation between God and the world. God becomes the Prime Mover of a world that turns into an object. The relationship between God and the world is spelt out in terms of cause and effect. Thus objectification of the world is radicalized by the scientific worldview of the Enlightenment. The world becomes a big machine that functions according to laws that can be discovered and used for prevision, control and production. This has made material development possible. The world is secularized, that is, autonomous, to the point that God is not needed any more — except as a Prime Mover who does not interfere in its normal functioning. Some theologians even proclaim proudly that the objectification of the world and the progress of science and the consequent material development should be grateful to the Christian doctrine of creation. Current ecological concerns have challenged this view which looks at the world only as an object to be dominated, exploited and consumed. They seek to substitute the mechanistic view of the world by an organic one.

Some streams of Indian tradition take the body as a model for understanding the world. Our body is not something apart from us. It is part of us It has a certain autonomy. But it is ourselves. We can neither objectify it nor instrumentalize it. We are not only our body Our spirit inhabits and animates the body and yet transcends it. Our body is the medium in and through which we express ourselves It also mediates our presence to the world The world — nature, light and colour, times and seasons, heat and cold — has an impact on us through our bodies. The body and the world are also the field and the me-

dium of our creativity. We make ourselves what we are in history, in time and space, in our bodies. We create the world we inhabit through our art and culture. We give it meaning. On the other hand we have to respect the universe and its processes and live in harmony with them. This is necessary not only for our well-being but also for our survival. The world can continue, perhaps as a desert, without any living beings, particularly the humans. But we, with our bodies, cannot live without the world and its air, light, water, food, etc.

Indian tradition uses the symbol of the human body to understand God's relation to the world: the world as the body of God. The fact of creation introduces a radical dependence of the world on God. But it is not a separation, but a profound relationship. God can be without the world, but the world cannot exist without God. The world becomes the mediation of God's action in history in favour of the humans. God is present and active in the world. The Spirit is the source of newness and creativity, both in the beginning and in an ongoing manner. In Jesus, God becomes flesh and enters the world and its history. God is leading the world to its final consummation. The Christian God is not one who stands apart from the world as the Prime Mover, but one who is very much involved in it.

The Humans

The traditional dichotomy between God and the world affects the relationship between the humans and God. Just as creation, including humanity, is objectified in relation to God, God is also objectified in relation to us. God is out there, in heaven. He is the Transcendant, the Creator. Sin is seen as further increasing the divide. The biblical image of the 'Father' seeks to bring God a little closer, but has not entered fully into popular Christian consciousness.

I think that we have to rediscover our true identity in many areas. First of all we have to rediscover our own self-worth. We are created in the image of God and this gives us an inherent dignity. This is primordial and cannot be lost. Sin may come in as a disorder that disturbs our relationships with God, with others and with the world, but is never a total break — at least till death and judgement. If in the first Adam we have all sinned, we have also been radically redeemed in the second Adam. So

We are living in a world torn between the forces of good and evil with the freedom that is God's gift to us, involved with the world and with others in a cosmic history. This global self-image needs some unpacking.

We are accustomed to think of God as the Other, outside of us, acting on us through all sorts of mediators and mediations like the sacraments. To think of God, not as a He or She, but as a Thou was considered a big advance in theology, since it makes the divine-human relationship not mechanical but personal. But the Indian tradition goes further and thinks of God as a deeper I — the *Atman*. The *advaita* principle, prescinding from the variety of explanations offered by philosophers, affirms unity-in-difference, not simply a pantheistic unity. Sometimes Hindus are accused of looking on themselves as divine But there is a basic truth in the affirmation. Even as sinners, especially when we are radically redeemed in Christ, we are children of God in whom the Spirit dwells This divinity in us is not a He/She, nor a Thou, but a deeper I. This is affirmed by John and Paul. The Fathers spoke of divinization of the human. I think the problem is the following: when we think of ourselves, do we think of ourselves only as the descendants of the first Adam who sinned, or also as reborn in the second Adam who has redeemed us? Or is the divinization postponed to a time after death? Is the world we are living in affected only by the sin of Adam or also by the transforming power of Christ and the Spirit?

Traditional theology and spirituality are said to focus on the individuals and their conversion. Today we are more sensitive to the social dimension. Sometimes we seem to be tempted to limit the social dimension to the justice aspect of relationships, emphasizing our responsibility for the other. Liturgists love to emphasize coming together and common singing and celebration. I think that we should rediscover our identity as *persons in community*, which finds expression in the symbolic world of culture and shapes our world-view, value-system and network of relationships. Then we shall speak of cultural creativity and transformation, celebration of life and community. Justice will then not be seen as an end in itself, but as a means to and expression of love. Liturgy will be seen as a symbol that is meaningful because it expresses what is lived in community.

Traditionally we thought of sin as transgression of a law. Today we speak of structural sin. I think that the oriental tradi-

tion sees sin in the wider context of evil in the world. We are living in a world where good and evil are in conflict. But in the plan of God the conflict is meant to be creative. The conflict is not between two powers equally balanced. The victory of the good is already assured in Christ. Within this overall context, evil is the reverse side of freedom. As long as it is a reality in our world, it has a purpose in the plan of God. Do we not sing about the 'happy fault' in the paschal vigil? To me, considering evil merely as personal transgression seems reductive. Talking of structural sin merely adds to this a social dimension. And yet the ideas of Original Sin and of Satan indicate a dimension that transcends the personal. In the Bible we have the book of Job which evokes the problem but surrenders to the mystery of God. The Chinese speak of the 'yin' and the 'yang'. I think that the Indian epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, struggle with the same questions. The evil people are often seen as playing a role in the process to the final triumph of God's order, which benefits also the evildoer The principle of karma tries to explain why people suffer or why some one does evil. It is again, as in the Christian tradition, a personal explanation. But it does not explain the interplay of good and evil as a cosmic process. Could we see creation itself as an ongoing process of order emerging out of chaos? Is evil an element in a world that is limited and in process? Is there a necessary personal dimension to it? The problem of evil will continue to be a mystery. But I think that the oriental traditions will help us to explore different aspects of it. The Mahabharata for example sees history as an interplay of freedoms that involves evil but is subordinated to divine purpose. Maybe one day we will develop a theology of the Mahabharata

God, Immanent and Transcendent

Indian tradition, if anything, is the affirmation of God as the transcendent Absolute that relativizes everything. The Christian tradition so far thinks of God as Creator. Even if one speaks of creation out of nothing, it is still perceived as a causal relationship. The autonomous reality of the world is affirmed. We saw above the danger of this autonomy becoming absolute. In India we prefer, rather, not to deny the reality of the world, but to affirm its radical relativity. A few may exaggerate this and say

that the world is unreal. Sometimes the Indian affirmation is interpreted from a Western idealist perspective.

Relativity here is not an epistemological category, but an ontological one. It is an affirmation of radical dependence. The Latin — as opposed to Orthodox — theological tradition easily speaks a representative and instrumental language. The priest acts in the name of God. The sacraments are instruments of grace. The danger is that, if transcendence is seen as otherness, there may be a tendency to grant undue autonomy to, if not absolutize, the mediators and mediating structures. The '*ex opere operato*' principle, for instance, defends the preeminence of God's action as against human disposition and response. But in practice it could acquire magical overtones. The Orthodox principle of epiclesis protects the absoluteness of God's action. To affirm the relativity of everything is also to affirm the freedom of and in the Spirit in relation to mediating and organizational structures of every kind.

The Indian tradition also strongly affirms the immanence of God as the Âtman. Transcendence itself can be seen as immanent, as depth. Therefore one emphasizes interiority and experience. One does not seek God elsewhere, but in one's own depths. This affects the way one prays. Silence and concentration lead to awareness and presence. Rituals become symbolic celebrations of God's presence, not its sources.

Another way of affirming God's immanence is to discover God in the world. God is active in the world and in history. A certain view of history makes it a mere human project. But history itself is subsumed into the mystery of God's plan for the world. This perspective makes it easy to find God in the world, in persons and in events (history). Such a presence of God does not do away with human liberty, but integrates it in a wider and deeper purpose. Responsible freedom therefore includes an effort to discern the divine purpose for oneself and for the world. The interplay of divine and human freedom can lead to a creative tension. Popular religiosity is particularly sensitive to God's immanence in the world and in life. Paradoxically it is also much more open to God's providence and transcendence.

The rediscovery of God as Trinity, rather than a practical Christomonism, will broaden our perspectives and experiences. However I think we must resist the tendency to overplay functionalism: creation, redemption, sanctification; the time of God,

the life of Christ and the time of the Spirit, etc. Similarly speaks of Christ active in the Church and the Spirit in all religions. Neither such a disjunction, nor a subsequent attempt at integration by characterizing the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ clarify anything. Rather than project our experience of pluralism on the Trinity, the Trinity must inspire us to discern the advaitic unity underlying all reality. This awareness of a pluralism-in-unity will also lead us to explore the divine-human in Christ, without reducing one to the other.

Integral Liberation

After exploring the way to look at the world, the human and God, we can move on to look at certain dimensions of praxis. Here new questions or areas of reflection are emerging.

Integral liberation or *moksha* is the goal of Indian *sadhana* or religious practice. There has always been a tension between renunciation of the world and enjoying it to the full, but in the proper way, according to *dharma* or cosmic order, pursuing the four-fold goal of life (wealth, pleasure, righteousness and liberation), following the different stages of life. An attempt at integration by the *Bhagavad Gita* resulted in the interiorization of renunciation as doing one's duty without being attached to the fruit. I wonder whether this holistic perspective could not give rise to a spirituality for people in the world that we are always looking for, integrating desireless action and finding God in all things, leading to being contemplatives in action.

Under the impact of liberation theology from Latin America, Indian theologians speak about the option for the poor and the struggle for their liberation. In India such an option takes concrete forms as option for the Dalits and for the indigenous peoples. Indian theologians have moreover focussed on related themes, giving an Indian orientation and context to liberation theology. First of all they speak of the role of religion in liberation. Religion tends to be legitimizing. But it can also be prophetic, criticizing the existing situation, proposing an alternative system of values and inspiring and motivating liberative action. In a multi-religious society as that of India, religions are challenged to be prophetic in collaboration, each believer finding resources in his/her own religion but collaborating for the defence and promotion of common human and spiritual values. In the tradition

of Gandhi, we do not exclude conflict, but emphasize the use of active non-violence as the way to bring about personal and social transformation and reconciliation. The authentic practice of non-violence supposes an option to *be* poor, shown in personal detachment, discipline and integration. In recent years we also begin to speak of the need to transform not only economic and political structures, but also social and cultural ones. The focus is on building community, especially in the context of social discriminations, and on a change of worldviews and values.

The field of *sadhana* or spiritual praxis is one area where we can claim to have made some progress. Various types of ashrams are experimenting with new ways of living and pursuing integral liberation. Indian methods of prayer and spiritual experience are seriously practised by some. Under the pressure of the official liturgy on the one side and various psychological techniques on the other, the pursuit of Indian *sadhana* tends to be elitist and episodic. From a theological point of view we have not yet explored the anthropological and theological implications of Indian sadhana. Swami Abhishiktananda struggled with these Such an effort will save our theological reflection from being purely academic We keep repeating constantly that Indian theology is born out of Indian experience. But for the moment such experience seems limited to the socio-economic sphere. One does not see an equal urgency or desire to plunge into oneself or into God, not apart from, but in the very context of life in the world and of concern for the poor.

Inter-Religious Encounter

Our experience of believers of other religions in an ongoing dialogue of life has given us a positive appreciation of other religions as symbolic meditations of the divine-human encounter, without ignoring their limitations. On the other hand the encounter with other religions has opened our eyes to the limitations of our own. To accept the legitimacy of other religions involves being positive to the inspiration and revelation of other religious Scriptures and being open to praying together with them. However, what is permissible in principle is not always advisable in practice, especially without proper preparation.

Such openness to other religions does not lead to an easy eirenicism which declares all religions to be the same or which

considers the world as a super-market of religions where one can pick and choose what one wants. Openness to the religions is basically openness to other believers and [illegible] who is present and active in them. This respect for the others also means respect for the differences that come from experience, history, culture and freedom, both of God and the humans. It also means being loyal to our own identity as Christians, praising God for his marvelous works for us and for the world in Christ, giving an account of the hope that is us and inviting others to share our joy and hope.

Living in a multi-religious society, we also experience religions as divisive. On the one hand, religion is for life and it cannot keep out of anything that is important to human and community life, including politics. On the other hand, religion as institution and its representatives must keep out of politics as an institution. Otherwise in a multi-religious society like India religion becomes politicized and politics become communal. Europe has had a history of Church-State conflicts, which is one of the reasons for its present secularization. The models of relationship evolved there in the context of 'Christian' societies, the Church itself acting as a State, are not ideal, at least for multi-religious societies like ours. India is a secular State, in the sense that the state is not anti- nor even a-religious, but is expected to be positive to all religions, provided they fulfil their function in society. This is a delicate balance that has to be constantly worked at and monitored and not taken for granted. Vested interests, especially political ones, will always try to abuse religion for their own ends. Similarly the kind of role that the Church can have in the Christian societies of Latin America it cannot have in India. Our situation therefore leads us to a deeper reflection on the role of religion in politics. Religions should be prophetic. Religions should do it in a collaborative and convergent mode leading to community and harmony.

The Church and Culture

There has been much discussion recently about the inculturation of the Gospel as an incarnational process. We see it as an encounter between Gospel and culture which is dialogical, inter-cultural and inter-religious. The locus of such an encounter is in the building up of the local Church. It is a

hermeneutical process from below in which a community lives and expresses its faith experience in the context of its double heritage as Indian and Christian. What is important in this process is the hermeneutics, which has three elements: to interpret the tradition of faith and the living tradition of India and to actualize them in the contemporary situation.

The interpretation of the faith tradition involves the development of criteria which distinguish between the challenge of faith and its many manifestations in history. We have to be careful about two tendencies. One is the tendency to privilege the very first expressions of the faith in the primitive Church. The other tendency is to consider the development of the faith-expression as linear and so attribute a normative character to all that has gone before. For example, we can appreciate the clarifications provided by the first Councils for an understanding of the mysteries of the Trinity and of Jesus Christ. At the same time without undervaluing, or denying, or trying to rewrite these dogmas, we can find new ways of living, exploring and expressing those mysteries in other cultures and other historical circumstances. This is dogmatic pluralism In the midst of this pluralism, revelation remains the norm, but not necessarily its many expressions in the course of history. Discussions about interpretation, normativity, criteria, etc , are still very much alive because pluralism is a new experience for us.

The attempt to integrate our own Indian tradition has also raised many problems with regard to the interpretation of Indian symbols. Liturgists and artists, and also theologians, have struggled with this Some have distinguished, for instance, between natural/cosmic, mythic and historical symbols of religious traditions. At the moment we seem to have reached a stalemate in this area We should avoid archeologism and be creative. We should also be sensitive to history, cultural pluralism within India and relevance to life today. But the problems still invite exploration

In the course of these discussions, one should not forget that interpretation does not happen in the abstract, but in the context of the effort to actualize the faith in the life of the community. The role of faith in life is to be prophetic and countercultural. How can religion take on cultural form and at the same time remain critical of culture? The experience of the Church with the caste system and the Dalits shows us the dangers of a

too easy inculturation. But the awareness of the danger does not necessarily offer us a way of avoiding it. We have to search the way, perhaps through experimentation. Unfortunately the Church cannot present itself as the champion of social equality, though there are prophetic elements in our Scripture. It is significant that Ambedkar chose to go to Buddhism, thus remaining within the Indian great tradition. Similarly the Indian tradition has also positive resources to offer for the development of feminist and ecological theologies. These have been explored by others also and need to be integrated.

The idea of the local Church and the vision of the universal Church as a communion of local Churches is still rather new in theological awareness. This is an area in which our own experience, struggles and reflections as a local Church can make a creative contribution to the universal Church.

These various areas of the praxis of the faith raise many general questions for reflection that refer to our theoretical assumptions rather than to pastoral practice. I shall recall a few, without trying to be exhaustive.

The Vision of the Mystery

In his letters St Paul speaks of the mystery which is the plan of God for the world (cf. Eph 1:3-10). He speaks of it as cosmic, embracing the whole of the cosmos and of history. We seem, somehow, to have lost this vision I think that there are three causes for this. First of all, we have limited God's saving action to what has been narrated to us in the Bible. Secondly, we have looked even at this limited vision through the spectacles of a positivist view of history which sees it as a linear, progressive succession of events in space-time. Thirdly, this has led us to ignore the mystery of God's presence and action which happens in history and yet transcends it and provides the horizon that makes history itself meaningful.

Our Indian experience teaches us again that the mystery of God's saving self-communication starts with creation and embraces the whole of history. Today there is much talk of creation spirituality. But it may be restricted to concern for material creation. What we want to stress is that the whole of history is a history of salvation. This provides a profound unity for humanity and history, as Pope John Paul II has highlighted recently. It

is in the context of this that we have to discover and specify the role of God's particular action in the Bible and in the Church. In the historical books of the Old Testament we see the process of discovering creation itself as covenantal, in the light of the covenant at Sinai. The danger for us lies in going in a contrary direction: instead of admiring and glorifying the cosmic mystery of God, we seek to reduce it to the little light of our limited experience. Or we oppose the Bible as historical to every thing else as mythical.

This reductive process is helped by our positivist view of history. We exalt as biblical the linear view of history. In this perspective, everything that is not biblical becomes pre-biblical, related to the Bible as imperfect to perfect, preparation to fulfilment. Such a view has no place for the pluralism and creativity of the Spirit. Rather than bow before the mystery in an attitude of contemplation, silence and discernment, we go armed with a norm that claims to judge all.

The discomfort before such a reductive perspective makes Indian theologians explore the relationship between history and mystery. My love for another manifests itself and grows through a multiplicity of expressions, gestures and acts. These give historical, that is, space-time, reality to a relationship which transcends them. Love makes these expressions meaningful. Here we see the distinction and the relationship between the physical and the spiritual. The relationship between history and mystery can be understood analogically. Some in the West tend if not to deny at least to reduce the spiritual and the mysteric to the physical and the historical. Mystery and transcendence are considered unreal From such point of view, the idea of universality is not understood at the level of mystery and transcendence but tends to be seen merely as the universalization of a particularity.

The Mission of the Church

The mission of the Church in God's plan of salvation was easy enough to understand when it was contrasted with other religions as presence with absence, or full with partial. In a more pluralistic and cosmic perspective where other religions are considered elements in God's plan, and God's saving grace reaches out to all peoples in ways unknown to us, the mission

of the Church needs redefinition. Indian theologians have tried to do so in many ways. We distinguish, without separating, the Reign of God and the Church. We refocus the goal of mission as the building up of the Reign of God, and the goal of the Church as being its symbol and servant. We speak of the symbolic dimension of the Church, exploring the idea of the Church as sacrament, but talking more in personal terms of 'service', than in physical terms of 'instrument'. We see proclamation and dialogue as dialectical poles of the complex movement of evangelization, without subordinating one to the other. We seek to understand the dynamism of mission as prophecy, pilgrimage and peoples' movement. We explore the specific way of Christ in mission, namely the way of kenosis and of the suffering servant. We see the specificity of the Church in witnessing to God as love; to Chrit's death and resurrection as giving a special meaning to suffering and offering an assurance of life and newness; and to its own vocation as the sacrament of reconciliation and communion of all things. Salvation itself has to be seen not as rescuing individuals from the fire of hell but in the cosmic sense of making all thing new (cf Rev 21:5). All these themes need further development and refinement.

The Image of Christ

Indians speak of the cosmic Christ. People who are familiar with the distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith seem to equate quickly the cosmic Christ with the Christ of faith and accuse the Indian of denying the importance of the Jesus of history. This equation is not correct. The cosmic Christ is related to the Jesus of history in the same way that mystery is related to history. The Jesus of history is the incarnation of the cosmic Christ or the Word of God. The paschal mystery itself has cosmic, transhistoric and mysteric dimensions. Such an articulation is an effort by Indian theologians to explore the divine-human identity of Jesus, without reducing one to the other.

The uniqueness of Christ is often mentioned as a problem. That God becomes human or saves in and through the paschal mystery of Jesus is not a problem for most Indians. The real problems lie elsewhere. The proclamation of the uniqueness of Christ is often really an affirmation of the uniqueness of Christianity. The vision of the Second Vatican Council that the Spirit

offers each one the possibility of participating in the paschal mystery in ways unknown to us offers space for other religions because it is God who saves in Christ and the Spirit, not the religions. The questions to ask then are: What is the significance of the paschal mystery and how does it reach out all peoples, even outside the Church? There have been many theories of redemption in tradition that go from penal, juridical and sacrificial to symbolic and moral/personal. Perhaps we have to explore new ones. The uniqueness of Christ is not explained the same way in all these theories. Similarly we have to move beyond categories like implicit and explicit faith and anonymous Christians. To the question, How is salvation mediated?, the simple traditional answer is 'faith'. But faith in what? What is the faith of a Hindu who is saved? These questions cannot be answered through conceptual distinctions in the context of the existing theology. Here are challenges to keep Indian theologians busy during the coming years.

I think that Indians are not so much interested in the metaphysical composition of Jesus' personality or the complexities of his divine-human psychology as in his significance for our life today. They try to explore this significance through images like the 'guru', the 'liberator', the 'man of sorrows', the 'cosmic dancer', etc.

Conclusion

In concluding, I would like to repeat that my suggestions are exploratory. They have also been concise and rapid. I am only pointing to possible areas for reflection and discussion. I am suggesting that an Indian theology is already emerging in terms of new questions and an Indian way of approaching them starting from the Indian experience. I have tried to bring together reflections in many areas Becoming aware of them may stimulate our interest and imagination. I can only hope that others will challenge, question and creatively go beyond the suggestions made here.

VJTR 58 (1994) 573-583

Ecumenism as a Movement of Justice:Focus on Asia

Felix WILFRED

This is a slightly revised version of a talk given at the colloquium on "Ecumenism and Justice" organized by the International Review *Concilium* in Princeton, U.S.A., May 23-25, 1994 Dr Wilfred teaches in the Department of Christianity, University of Madras. He sees ecumenism in Asia as the effort to create a communion of communities, the traditional Christian ecumenism being just a sacrament of this larger endeavour Justice in the biblical sense of concern for the marginalised is constitutive of ecumenism The Asian experience also leads us to redefine the understanding of the Church in relation to the larger community in which Christians are inserted

In its conception and practice ecumenism relates to communion and fellowship. The pursuit of unity among the various churches constitutes the Christian ecumenical movement. Unity is a very significant concern, of course; no less crucial, however, is the question of justice, if we read the writing on the wall in our world today.

This colloquium, I understand, is an effort to explore the intimate relation between commitment to ecumenism and to the cause of justice. Within the larger concern of the colloquium, my contribution will be to throw some light on the question of the relationship between ecumenism and justice from an Asian perspective. Given such widely differing situations in Asia, I hasten to add that my reflections will be more specifically from the South Asian experience.

More than a Field of Involvement

Ecumenism generally means today the inter-relationship among the various churches. The questions of doctrine, worship, ministry, structures, etc., figure prominently on the ecumenical agenda. The importance of common witness was present from the very beginning of the modern ecumenical movement, but it has acquired new urgency during the past few decades. It is epitomized in the catchword "service unites, doctrine divides."

However, even if importance is given to the relations among the churches, justice has remained *one* of the areas, albeit a significant one, of our common involvement.

Against the backdrop of our Asian experience, it appears to me that a different approach is called for. The question of justice cannot be simply *an* area of ecumenical collaboration among the churches. Justice is intimately tied up with ecumenism to the point of being a constitutive part of its very concept. This will be best understood if we put ourselves in the perspective of the contemporary experiences in a communally vulnerable and multi-religious region like South Asia.

Redefining of Ecumenism

To begin with, the Asian experience seems to demand a *redefinition* of the concept of ecumenism, and a *contextualization* of justice. Only often this shall we be able to see more clearly the inextricable relationship between the process of ecumenism and the practice of justice.

In Asia we are in a situation in which many concepts of foreign extraction, each one with its culture-bound history, are competing for our allegiance. We can even speak of a conceptual imperialism in all areas of life, today sharply on the increase. In a country like India, for example, we struggle to define a concept like secularism, or an institution like democracy. It is obvious that the categories and concepts we employ to interpret our experience colours very much our perception of and interaction with reality. When certain conceptual straitjackets are imposed, what results is a distortion of truth with attendant practical consequences.

There has been some uneasiness with the concept of ecumenism, because it does not lead us to where some of our important concerns lie. Some have tried to overcome this situation by speaking of a "*wider ecumenism*" to refer to the inter-relationship of Christian churches with peoples of other faiths, and of a "*secular ecumenism*" when it is a question of forging relationships with non-religious movements and ideologies. I am afraid that this stretching of the concept of ecumenism seems to make peripheral the questions which are central in our Asian experience. The reason for this is clear. The principal referent in the prevailing concept of ecumenism is the relationship among

the churches. The unity and reconciliation in inter-church relations become the model which is extended to embrace the relationship with other faiths and ideologies.

In the multi-religious context and in a situation of escalating communal riots and caste wars, our primary and pressing concern is the unity and reconciliation of the various segments of people in our society. What we require is a *communion of communities*, composed of different religious, ethnic, linguistic, ideological groups. If ultimately the goal of the ecumenical pursuit is unity, then the inter-relationship among the various communities becomes for us the *fundamental ecumenical pursuit*. From the Biblical point of view this primary meaning of ecumenism is perfectly in tune with the unity of humankind which is part of God's plan for the world. It is also suggested by the original meaning of *oikumene* — the whole inhabited world.

From this primary meaning we could understand *inter-religious ecumenism*. For, as primordial social forces in Asia, the various religious traditions need to be in fellowship and dialogue with each other in order to promote the communion of communities. *Christian ecumenism* as relationship among the churches becomes significant for us not so much as an intramural effort within a divided Christianity, but as a movement which can support and sustain the communion of communities which we seek as our most urgent priority.

Contextualization of Justice

It is in relation to this ideal of ecumenism as communion of communities in a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society that we have to understand the question of justice. We should, first of all, acknowledge the remarkable differences that exist in the very concept of justice as well as in the modes of its expression. There is, evidently, certain absoluteness about justice; but this absoluteness can never be maintained except in a contextually plural way. The absoluteness of justice is effective at the micro-level only within the dynamics of the history of a people, nation or group, and thus cannot be replaced by any universal common code or a "world-ethic," as some Western theologians are attempting today.

Every day we witness concrete situations in our societies in which what one group or community (for example the Hindus)

sees as just is contested by another group (the Muslims) with quite different perception of justice. In other words, we constantly face a situation of conflict, ironically of "justice against justice." It is enough to think of the conflict that took place in Ayodhya with contrasting claims from each group — Hindus and Muslims — each with its own perception of what is just. At the international level, one could think of the different reactions to the recent incident of caning of the American teenager Michael Fay for his misbehaviour in Singapore, which even called for an American Presidential intervention. The perceptions of justice differed widely — some seeing the punishment as primitive and brutal, others as against human rights, and still others as just and necessary.

Such experiences make us realize that general theories about justice do not respond to the complexity of the concrete empirical relationship among various communities and groups. A proper approach to justice is possible in our situation only if we place any issue in the local setting, and consider it in relation to its socio-historical roots. Who can really understand, for example, the injustices suffered by the *dalits* of India except against the millennial historical background of discriminations perpetrated by the upper castes and classes through social, economic, religio-ideological and cultural means? To know contextually what justice is, one has to enter into the history of over two thousand years of struggle against caste stratification and discrimination in Indian society. Justice has a contextual and concrete name, and in India justice is today the *anti-caste movement*. Speaking here in Princeton, I can very well understand that in this country, for the African Americans, Hispanics and other minorities, the concrete name for justice is the *anti-racist movement*. So has it been in South Africa.

Local Frame of Unity

Similar is also the case in the question of unity and communion which require to be sustained by contextual resources. In the minds of many, the secular, which has its own origin and particular development in the West, provides the feasible solution for unity among a wide variety of communities and groups functioning with conflicting interests in our Asian societies. The secular is purportedly a kind of neutral space to which each

group can accede, leaving behind its particular tradition, history, resources, etc., to be able to meet the other. Today, globalization is being floated as a means of unification.

Our experience in the societies in South Asia shows clearly that such borrowed categories and ways of approach are not able to create unity among the various groups. They lack the necessary force to weld together religious, ethnic, caste and linguistic groups. They are not able to bring the various groups face to face with each other, but gloss over differences in the pursuit of a neutral point — the secular.

On the other hand, we know that much before the advent of the modern ideà of the 'secular' there existed a long tradition of tolerance, understanding and mutuality among the various groups in South Asia. It is interesting to note that the resources for this ecumenical spirit and way of life did not come from neutral secular thought, but from the different religious traditions and indigenous philosophical *darsanas* — 'visions'. More basically, the ethos and the rich wisdom the people acquired through long experience in inter-communitarian relationship, equipped them for a life of mutual understanding. Their way of life turned to be instinctively ecumenical, as the various communities learnt to live and interact with one another. True ecumenism as communion of communities needs to avail itself of these inherited sources of unity in terms of principles, symbols, etc., which cannot be substituted with categories of unity extracted from another history and environment. These can at the most add some support.

Ecumenism, Globalization and Peripheralization

In the light of our reflections regarding the *redefinition of ecumenism and contextualization of justice*, we can now broach the question of their mutual relationship.

Ecumenism as the pursuit of a communion of communities, and justice understood contextually are confronted with a high-sounding conceptual ideal which hides an insidious danger. I mean the concept of globalization, which is destructive both of ecumenism and justice. Let me explain.

Ecumenism is a matter of inter-relationships. There is there a mutuality, an exchange among peoples and groups. Globalization is an external process, almost mechanical, in which there take

place growing functional inter-dependence through global markets, the movement of capital, technology, labour and life-style, with their concomitant attitudes and values that cut across national borders. Not long ago, we still spoke seriously of 'inter-continental,' international, inter-regional, etc., where the *inter-* indicated the idea of mutuality, give and take. All that has now given way to the concept of globalization. Globalization is, so to say, something happening out there, and there is no choice for communities, groups or individuals but to be swept into this movement.

Ecumenism is a process of building up bridges of understanding and communication among the various segments of society, inspired by a vision of unity that binds everyone into one human family. It is respectful of the diversity of ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic factors. Globalization, instead, at the micro as well as at the macro levels erodes into the self-confidence of peoples and groups. It brings through the backdoor the social theory of evolution, according to which the future of the underdeveloped peoples is foreshadowed in the advancement achieved by the developed ones, and towards which they (the underdeveloped) should aspire. The worst thing that happens is the internalization of this theory by many Asians themselves, which conditions their behaviour and attitudes towards society and its various groups.

Globalization, like the discourse about the universal, is generally the language of the privileged, the powerful. Experience shows that this is so both at the macro as well as at the micro level. The process of globalization is in fact something like a huge blanket spread over our societies covering up situations of gross disparity and inequality Greater unity and understanding among peoples, nations, etc., is evidently an ideal that should be striven after. But it is very doubtful if such a goal can be achieved by the actual process of globalization. Globalization yes, if it is a matter of inter-relationships among *equal* partners. But our globalization conceals on *asymmetry* of power, and in this situation, it invariably goes in favour of the dominant nations, castes and classes, leaving the poor and the powerless in the lurch. Globalization is at the same time a process of *peripheralization*.

The Creation of Community as a Process in Establishing Justice

This brings us to a focussed reflection on the process of ecumenism and the process of establishing justice. There is true ecumenism, or the creation of a communion of communities, where there takes place also a process of justice. Justice here does not mean simply 'neutrality' or 'fairness', as in the liberal discourse. Rather, what really creates true communion of communities is justice as the privileging of the powerless, the poor and the small in our societies. It is here that the Biblical message about justice assumes great importance as the generative force of true ecumenism, universality and catholicity.

The very constitution of Israel as a community and as a people was the result of the intervention of God's justice in favour of the poor, the oppressed and the powerless. Therefore, the basis and the cementing force for Israel as a historical community was its participation in the justice of God which consists in the defence of the poor. It was through the praxis of justice in its midst that the community was continuously created, and it thereby bore witness to the justice of God. Injustice and the oppression of the weak and the poor were the disrupters and killers of the communitarian existence, and therefore of the convenant. The prophetic message was basically a reminder to the Jewish nation of the intimate connection between the poor and God's covenantal relationship.

The Biblical vision throws much light on our ecumenical pursuit to create a communion of communities in Asian societies. Since there can be no true community in a situation of domination, be it social, political, cultural or economic, the promotion of justice as the defence of the poor and their cause becomes the quintessence of the process of ecumenism. Ecumenism becomes an effective reality to the extent that justice percolates and turns into the cementing force in the inter-relationship among the various groups and communities in our societies.

We understand, then, why today in Asia the foremost contribution of Christians lies in the area of ecumenism, in the search for ways and means to create communion among communities through the praxis of justice and the rejection of the marginalization of the poor. For Christians who are inspired by their faith justice is not simply based on 'natural rights' or hu-

man rights. It is a matter relating to the heart of their faith, in as much as it is a response to God's favouring of the poor by being faithful to his mode of relationship to humankind.

Catholicity through Justice

Such a Christian involvement in the work of ecumenism, calls for a fresh understanding of what universality or catholicity means. It is not required here that I dwell on the different understandings of universality that have been developed during the course of Christian history. However, I would like to underline the necessity of a shift in focus against the background of the challenging ecumenical task we are facing in our Asian societies.

Ecumenism is closely related to catholicity. The common understanding of catholicity has been geographical expansion. It is interesting to note, however, that in the earliest times, geographic expansion was never considered in isolation. It was viewed in relation to *truth*, veracity. The evidence and justification for the Church community was that it was spread everywhere, in contrast to the geographically limited presence of the sects. At a time when distant travels were not very common and the means of transportation were far from what they are today, it is understandable that the phenomenon of universal presence was a matter of admiration, and the fact was easily considered as itself proof of truth. Looked in this way, today the multinationals would be strong competitors for truth, thanks to their ubiquitous glamorous ads, where, however, as we well known, truth is the first casualty.

I think that today the ecumenical task in Asian societies calls for an understanding of catholicity in relation to *justice*. Justice is to be viewed as the yard-stick for true universality. Now, if we also keep in mind the Biblical perspective on justice I mentioned earlier, it is easy to see why true ecumenism and the catholicity of the Christian community is to be judged in terms of its contribution to mould and shape human inter-relationships, and to create institutions, structures, etc., which keep the poor and the powerless as the focus. In fact, in the communion of communities in Asia, the poor cut across all kinds of borders — ethnic, caste, linguistic, religious. And the universality of God's justice does not know any bounds or borders. It

reaches out to the poor and marginalized. By defending the poor across the borders, the Church community participates in the universality of God's justice, and contributes to the communion of communities.

As I noted earlier, the process of ecumenism should be simultaneously a process of justice. If so, the ecumenical path is to be so built in society that it naturally leads to the goal of justice. This imposes on religious groups the obligation of examining their own self-identity in terms of the ecumenical quest and the pursuit of justice.

Redefining the Nature of the Christian Communitarian Existence

The reflections made so far lead us naturally to a redefinition of the Christian community within the communion of communities in Asian societies. Even more basically, it calls for a fresh reflection on the very nature of the communitarian dimension of the Christian faith. The existing models of self-understanding in the Church do not seem to come to grips with the Asian ecumenical task.

The self-identity of a person or a group is not independent of others and other groups. In the past, the process of identity-formation of the Church as a community took shape over against the Jewish, Greek, Western and other environments. The self-understanding of the Church emerging out of this process of identity-formation, which has become the common theological understanding of the Church, when transported to a completely different environment as in our parts of Asia, causes serious difficulties in terms of relationships with other communities and groups.

There is then the formidable and challenging task of reformulating our self-understanding as Church through a fresh process of identity-formation in relation to the concrete communities — ethnic, religious, etc. — whose life and struggles, memory and hopes we share. This task cannot be achieved through a simple theological enterprise; it requires a constant praxis of dialogue and interaction with other groups and communities.

For the Christian community in Asia it is more important to underline what relates it to other communities than what distinguishes it. The challenge for the Christian community is not so

much about how to come to terms with the otherness of the "other." More pressing and important is the "we" of communion and solidarity with which we are bound together with all other communities in Asia. The other is not simply the non-I. There is the reality of a "we." The creation of true fellowship and communion among human beings, after the model of God's own covenantal relationship with his people, is what the Bible enjoins us. The quintessence of the community of the disciples of Jesus is to be the embodiment, or rather the sacrament, of this universal communion and solidarity.

This brings us to reflect on the necessity for the disciple of Jesus Christ in Asia to be intimately bound up with and share the life of the community of people with whom he or she lives, transcending all barriers. They are part of his or her own collective self.

What I am trying to say may become clearer if we take a typical situation in some parts of Asia. In North India, for example, we may find a Christian living isolated in a village, and it might take a hundred miles to find another Christian in another village, and still another two hundred miles before we come across one or two more Christians. Geographically they are so scattered that it is difficult to see how they could, in practice, be and live as a Christian community. This, however, does not exonerate the Christian from the fundamental obligation of a communitarian existence which faith requires of him or her. In such cases — and they are not rare in the vast Asian continent with a small number of Christians — one sees how important it is that the Christian make his or her own the community of people (cutting across religious, ethnic and other barriers) with whom he or she lives and shares in solidarity in all aspects and expressions of life.

In these cases, the community of a Christian's environment, with all its diversity of traditions, symbols, etc., becomes his or her community, the body of which he or she is a part. That would be also a manifestation of the catholicity of the faith the Christian professes, a faith that transcends all forms, as far as its communitarian existence is concerned. This faith realizes its communitarian dimension in the actual reality of love and communion that prevails among the people with whom the Christian lives and whose history and destiny he or she shares. It is in this community that a Christian would live with others the

justice of God which creates true communion and fellowship by favouring the weak and defending the poor. Thus one would experience some of the deeper dimensions of ecumenism and justice and their inter-connection.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to highlight a few points. From what I have tried to say, it may be easy to understand why ecumenism as communion of communities is our priority in Asia. The growth of this communion and fellowship among various communities will be proportionate to the promotion of justice, which itself requires to be contextualized. The unity and communion among the various communities cannot be achieved through conceptual frameworks of foreign extraction. We need local frameworks of unity. To the growth of this ecumenical fellowship and of justice in our societies, every community will make its contribution, drawing from the universal resources of its tradition.

As far as the Christian is concerned, there is the rich mine of the Biblical tradition and the life of Jesus and his message of the Kingdom to draw from in the pursuit of universal fellowship and commitment to justice. A Christian will understand the catholicity of his or her faith in terms of the justice of God which embraces all the poor and the marginalized across all borders. Further, true ecumenism also calls for a redefinition of the Christian communitarian existence in our Asian societies.

Finally, all the communities can draw inspiration from the many peoples' movements at work today in Asia. These movements, often with concrete issues as their focus, represent a conjunction of ecumenism and justice. In fact, many of these movements cut across religious, caste and linguistic affiliations. And in this way, they are ecumenical in spirit. In this spirit, the struggle for justice is carried on. Dialogue and collaboration with these movements by any community will be both an exercise in ecumenism and an expression of its commitment to justice.□

VJTR 58(1994) 584-590

Towards a Christian Perspective on Environment and Ecology

Fr Desmond DE SOUSA, C.Ss.R.

Starting from the three meetings in Rio 1992 the Redemptorist author (876, Albo Porvorim, Bardez, Goa 403521) explains the roots of the ecological crisis and the need to develop a new spiritual vision consonant with primaeval world-views, feminist concerns and the deeper biblical insights.

1. Introduction

At the Rio Earth Summit (June 1992) on Environment and Development three groups met separately. Each had its own perspective on the issue of Environment and Development.

At the luxurious Rio Centre over a 100 Heads of State and 1400 accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) met. Their perspective was how to agree on an Earth Charter that would mobilize the nations of the world to save Planet Earth from irreparable destruction.

At the scenically beautiful Flamingo Park, more than 7000 organizations from around the world met at the Global Forum. Their perspective was to complement the Earth Summit, not just by keeping an eye on it but also working out what ordinary people are going to do to solve the global ecological crisis.

In Baixada Fluminese — a place known as one of the poorest and most violent in Brazil — the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Meeting was held. Their perspective was to search for a "new heaven and a new earth." The best place to begin was among those people who were affected the most by ecological destruction, poverty, militarism. Here among the Christian communities they searched for people experiencing faith, hope and encouragement in the face of crushing problems.

A perspective is always a particular stance that one takes in relation to an issue. This stance is determined by the place or position from where one views the issue. Is a half glass of water "half full" or "half empty"? That depends on the stance one takes towards the reality: an optimistic or hopeful stance, or a pessimistic or despairing stance. Perspective is crucial.

For me, a Christian perspective must always be from the position of the victims. But it must be a hopeful perspective.

Bishop Mauro Morelli, the local host in Baixada Fluminese, referred to the statue of Christ the Redeemer towering high above Rio de Janiero, in his opening speech. "If Jesus came to the Earth Summit, he would come here, to where people are suffering and looking for a promised future .... It is as though Christ the Redeemer is calling to those officials at the Rio Centre with his right hand and telling them to turn their attention to where he is pointing with his left hand, to Baixada Fluminese."

I think that a Christian perspective on environment and ecology needs to reflect at different but inter-related levels.

The issues affecting the environment can be summed up under two basic headings: the destruction of nature (rape of the land, the disappearence of forests, etc.) and the pollution of the earth (air, water, food, etc.).

The Christian perspective on these environmental issues is STEWARDSHIP. National bishops' conferences have written pastoral letters responding to the destruction of nature and pollution of the earth in their countries stressing that humankind is God's steward. God has created nature and the earth out of love for us As good stewards of God the Creator, we have to take care of God's creation.

2. The Global Ecological Crisis

The reckless destruction of nature and pollution of the earth have caused an ecological crisis. This means that the very delicate and fragile balance between the different eco-systems that support life on Planet Earth is on the verge of being irreparably destroyed. Once destroyed beyond their ability to recover, the very sustainability of the life systems on Planet Earth is in doubt.

2.1 Sustainability vs Survival Debate

At the Rio Earth Summit, the central confrontation was between the leaders of the North and those of the South. It can be described as the sustainability vs survival debate. For the North, the ecological crisis presented threats to their reasonably secure way of life. They focussed on the sustainability of the Earth's eco-systems as an indispensable starting point for the debate.

Their immediate concern was that without planetary preservation all is lost for everyone.

For the South, the survival needs of the vast majority of their people and their struggle for existence was their immediate concern. Their starting point was that justice in economic and political relations between the North and the South would go a long way in preventing the plunder of their environmental resources. What was forgotten in the ensuing confrontation was the causes of the present ecological crisis.

The last 50 years of "development" (actually maldevelopment) have caused the ecological crisis. It is the model of development begun in the "Development Decades" of the 1950s and 1960s that led to the energy crisis of the 1970s, which in turn led to the debt crisis in the 1980s and now the ecological crisis of the 1990s.

The mechanistic model of development using science and technology injudiciously, as if the world's resources were limitless, is based on the Newtonian concept of the world as a machine.

The Church's response to this development model was cautious but fairly optimistic in Pope Paul VI's encyclical on *The Development of the Peoples* (1967). But Pope John Paul II's encyclical twenty years later *On the Church's Social Concern* (1987) is much more critical and pessimistic though not outright condemnatory. However, in his World Peace Day Message on the ecological crisis (Jan 1, 1990) he identified it as a human moral crisis. "Respect for life, and above all for the dignity of the human person, is the ultimate guiding norm for any sound economic, industrial or scientific progress."

2.2. *Five Hundred Years of Colonization*

However, the last fifty years of maldevelopment (1950s-1990s) encapsules 500 years of rape, plunder and destruction of the South by the colonizers from the North with blessings from the Pope. Christopher Columbus began the colonization of Latin America in 1492 and Vasco da Gama began the colonization of Africa and Asia in 1498.

Since the spread of Christianity is directly linked to the process of colonization, the official Church is reluctant to critique colonialism and neo-colonialism as remote cause for the moral

dimension of the ecological crisis — the lack of a respect for life.

However, Church groups have been highly critical of the colonization process from the perspective of those colonized (the victims). They are demanding not merely the cancellation of the entire Third World debt. They are preparing a Bill of Restitution from the North for the rape, pillage and destruction of the South.

3. Opportunity for a New Religious Vision

Like any crisis, the ecological crisis is a time of danger for the destruction of the planet and of opportunity for a new religious vision for healing the planet.

The American priest-"geologian" Thomas Berry blames religious people in the Church for the ecological crisis. The world, they believed, was a sinful place from which they, as God's representatives, had to flee. So since those who were close to God did not care for the world, the business people, the scientists and economists saw nothing wrong in exploiting the world to the maximum.

Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum physics conceives the world as a field of energies creating and recreating a web of relationships more like an organism or a spider's web than a machine. This new scientific vision of the Universe has led to the rediscovery of a neglected and so-called "primitive" dimension of spirituality called the Cosmic Vision.

This hitherto forgotten or dormant dimension of African and Asian spirituality has local and planetary dimensions. It is an opportunity for a radical recouping of our earthiness and symbiotic relationship with the rest of creation. Cosmic spirituality fills us with a sense of awe at the mystery of the expanding universe, while also making us sensitive to the vibrancy and resilience of life around us. Instead of seeking fulfillment in domination and power over the universe, we are called to be enveloped in the mystery of life — a life of interwovenness and interdependence, a life of communion with the life-giving, life-sustaining eco-systems and human relationships.

3.1. Cosmic Spirituality and the Bible

The Bible is concerned with salvation or life-giving blessings not only in the afterlife but also within this world and

within present history, individual and collective. It envisions a new world and a new history. Life-giving blessings mean food, rain, shelter, land, human rights and dignity, freedom, justice, forgiveness of sin, the Spirit in peoples' hearts — in short, the fullness of life. It desires us to see justice done to "the orphan, widow, refugee, poor," representing the oppressed and marginalized. Its salvific concern embraces nature, that is, the earth, air, trees, seas and birds.

3.2. *Cosmic Spirituality and Jesus*

The early Church communities created local theologies of Jesus, the Christ, that were relevant to their historical situations. There was an opportunity for God's Spirit to inspire the creativity of the local community to name and interpret Jesus' identity and ministry within different social contexts.

The Christological heresies forced a more universal, inclusive definition of Jesus' identity and ministry Jesus' divinity was so expressed as to be the unique, exclusive, universal and final manifestation of God among humankind. This was the understanding of Jesus that was communicated to the African and Asian peoples by the missionaries following the Vasco da Gama enterprise. In the same process, the European divisions and denominations and socio-economic, patriarchal and theological power quarrels were also imposed

The time is ripe for African and Asian peoples to appropriate for themselves the power of Jesus' identity and mission. The key question is: What would Jesus do if he were to reappear among us today? What would his Rule of Righteousness (Kingdom) mean for us, faced with the crises of today, e.g., the ecological crisis?

3.3. *Cosmic Spirituality and Eco-feminism*

The ecological movement and the feminist movement have merged into the eco-feminist movement Both movements discovered that they share a world-view, analysis, method, lifestyle and vision. They reflect similar life cycles and processes. The ebb and flow of the tides, the cyclical rhythm of the seasons and nature are reflected in women's life rhythms. They see the rape of the earth and the rape of women are rooted in "power-over" relationships which promote dualism and hierarchical op-

pression among all human beings.

They envision liberated and liberating relationships where "power-from-within" and "power-with" other beings are encouraged. They seek a spirituality which promotes the immanence of God, the sacredness of the world, the wholeness of bodily sensuality and sexuality and right relationships among all humans and with nature.

The tree captures the life-giving thrust and power of the eco-feminist movement. Its roots go deep into the "cosmic" soil of Mother Earth, strengthening it against erosion yet sucking its life-giving moisture. Its trunk thrusts upwards into the metacosmic realms with consummate uniqueness in its texture, its shapes, its size, its leaves, its branches. Its leaves transform death-dealing poisonous carbon dioxide into life-giving oxygen. It provides shelter and shade for the life and growth of diverse insects, plants, birds, animals and even humans. Its leaves die, becoming manure to recreate the soil. The cyclic, rhythmic processes of healing and recreating, life and death, symbolize the aspirations of the cosmic spirituality of eco-feminism.

I asked the tree
Tell me about God
And it blossomed.

Conclusion

The foundation for cosmic spirituality is God, the life-giving power. The cosmos is God's "womb", as it were. The intimate relationship between God and the cosmos explodes with seminal energy that generates and regenerates life. God, as it were, energizes the cosmos and the cosmos in return dances with the Creator in a cosmic dance of exquisite beauty, balance and creativity. This dance is often re-enacted in our African and Asian religious mythology, symbolism and spirituality.

At the Rio Earth Summit, the children in their simplicity captured this cosmic spirituality·

We want to inherit a clean Earth. We want everybody to understand that the Earth is like a beautiful garden which no one has the right to destroy.

Ecology is not only trees and animals and rivers. It is also hunger and homelessness. We should help our brothers and sisters who have been abandoned in the streets.

The words and gestures of the children were so moving that some interpreters wept and could not continue.

It is our indigenous peoples of Africa and Asia that are our resource people for this cosmic spirituality. Their cosmic values, rituals and practices are often considered "superstitious" by scientifically educated people. Whenever they approach or pass a river, trees, mountains, whenever they plant or fish or harvest, they ask permission from the spirits of the land, the mountain, the plants, the trees, the rivers, the streams. Thus they capture a cosmic interwovenness that can be a healing and transforming experience for us. The most moving speech at Rio was not at the Summit but at the press conference. Chief Oren N. Lyons, faithkeeper of the Confederation of Native Americans, spoke and a hush descended all around:

> The elders told us almost 500 years ago that there is going to come a time when you will not be able to drink the water. That water would become the enemy. That our great elder brother, the sun, from whom all life comes, will burn and smoke. That the thundering voices of the grandfathers that bring the rain will begin to kill the trees as it happens with acid rain .... We were taught that every chief must have the skin seven spans thick to withstand the barbs and arrows mostly from his own people. And not to counsel for ourselves, for our family or our generation But every decision should reflect on the welfare of the seventy generations from now. The time has come for such leadership

Even the usually cynical press corps gave him a standing ovation.

VJTR 58 (1994) 591-608

Veritatis Splendor : A Resurrection of the Concept of *intrinsece malum*. I

Vimal TIRIMANNA, C.Ss.R.

Last August marked the anniversary of the promulgation of the important papal encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. A Srilankan doctoral student of moral theology (I Redentoristi, CP 2458, 00100 Roma) analyses one of its key affirmations that there are *intrinsically evil acts* independently of the intention and the circumstances in which they are posited, which can never become good. This first part of the article studies the theological history of the concept from St Augustine to the Medieval times and St Thomas and down to the Moral Manuals of the early part of this century. The next part will study the contribution of the "Proportionalist" school to this reflection, and the use of the concept of intrinsically evil in the Magisterium, specially in *Veritatis Splendor*.

1. Introduction

In the Catholic tradition of Moral Theology, the concept of intrinsically evil acts (*intrinsece malum*) had its heyday in the period of the moral manuals that lasted almost till the middle of this century. The Second Vatican Council that practically marked the end of this period did not mention the phrase *intrinsece malum* in any of its documents, and the concept seemed to be disappearing from Catholic moral theology. The emergence of Proportionalism in the post-conciliar period challenged the "traditional" concept and laid to rest any doubts about the "death" of *intrinsece malum* in Catholic moral thinking.[1] However, *Veritatis Splendor* seems to bring about a "resurrection" of this concept.

Veritatis Splendor invites moral theologians to assist the Magisterium by their research work in clarifying and deepening its teachings:

> While recognizing the possible limitations of the human arguments employed by the Magisterium, moral theologians are called to develop a deeper understanding of the reasons underlying its teachings and to expound the validity and obligatory nature of the precepts it proposes, demonstrating their connection with one another and their relation with man's ultimate end.[2]

[1]Of course, there were the Deontologists, along with a couple of Magisterial declarations, who continued to insist that there is *intrinsice malum*.

[2]No. 110.

In this spirit we hope to analyze here the concept of intrinsically evil acts by briefly tracing its historical evolution in the Catholic tradition, along with the challenges it had to encounter, particularly from the proportionalists during the past few decades. We will then see how the Magisterium has used this concept in its official documents. Finally, we will consider its use in *Veritatis Splendor*, and some of the problems this raises.

2. The Concept

In 1973, James Murtagh published his dissertation on intrinsically evil acts.[3] All the moral manuals examined by Murtagh for this work contained the axiom "*bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocumque defectu*," from which it could be deduced that "a good intention will not make a bad object good."[4] Most probably, an improper understanding of this axiom may have paved the way for the manualistic tendency to identify the moral object with the physical object and the moral evil with the physical evil.[5] According to Murtagh, however, it would amount to a misrepresentation to say that the manuals always identified the moral object with the physical activity: but, certainly "there are indications that this happened occasionally."[6] In theory it was not intended; in practice, it did happen sometimes. Murtagh is of the opinion that

> there is an ambiguous use of the moral object in the manuals, and this could lead to an understanding of an intrinsic evil act as an act which is evil independent of all circumstances and motivation of the agent, because, as we have seen, intrinsic evil is usually discussed in relationship to the moral object.[7]

We may then define an intrinsically evil act as an act which is evil in itself or in its moral object, independent of any circumstances or the intention of the moral agent. That is to say that there are certain acts which are inherently evil, and as such, no intention or set of circumstances could ever justify them. A necessary consequence of such a definition is that the morality of

[3]James MURTAGH, *Intrinsic Evil An Examination of this Concept and its Place in Current Discussion on Absolute Moral Norms* Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, Facultas Theologiae, 1973

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 59

[5]*Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

[6]*Ibid.*, p. 60.

[7]*Ibid.*, pp. 60-61

[illegible]

such an act is already determined even before the [illegible] whatever circumstances and with whatever intention. Circumstances and intentions do not alter the morality of such an act. Accordingly, acts like masturbation, homosexual activity, [illegible] contraception, divorce, suicide, direct killing of the innocent, lying, etc., are held to be intrinsically evil, irrespective of the circumstances or the intentions.

One may recall that traditional Catholic moral theology has employed what is known as "the three-font principle" in determining the morality of human acts. One has to consider three main aspects in a moral act: the intention of the agent, the act in itself and the circumstances. The definition of an intrinsically evil act seems to make the intention and the circumstances practically irrelevant: apparently what matters here is only the act in itself. The manualists and the present day defenders of *intrinsece malum* hold that the act in itself is so disordered (or ordered towards evil) that the intention and the circumstances do not enter into the picture of its morality at all. They could afford to ignore totally the intention and the circumstances on the basis either that intrinsically evil acts are contrary to nature or that the human agent has not got the authority to perform such acts. Let us illustrate this point with two examples, namely, how lying and suicide were regarded as intrinsically evil in the tradition:

> (i) The nature and purpose of the faculty of speech is to communicate. Therefore, to use this faculty in such a way as to frustrate that purpose — as done in lying — is unnatural; it contributes to error and ignorance. It is even an attack on the very meaning of humanity and human inter-communications. As such, lying is always wrong, it is intrinsically evil[8]
>
> (ii) God alone has dominion over all life. Human life is a gift from God Human persons have the "use" of human life, but not control over it. To take one's life is, therefore, an act of presumption, a taking over of a divine prerogative because man has no dominion over his own life. As such, suicide is always wrong; it is intrinsically evil.[9]

Thus, the reasoning is either that the act is against nature or that it is not authorised by God. This will become clearer when we analyze the evolution in tradition of the concept of *intrinsece*

---

[8]Timothy E. O'Connell, *Principles for a Catholic Morality* rev.ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1990, pp. 188-189.

[9]*Ibid.*, p. 188

sion, in the following section. We may conclude this section by quoting Richard M. Gula, who more or less summarizes what we have said so far:

> Traditional moralists have claimed that certain actions (such as masturbation, contraception, sterilization, artificial insemination, direct killing of the innocent, divorce, and remarriage) were intrinsically morally evil in themselves. These actions were regarded as such either by being contrary to nature (following the "order of nature" interpretation of natural law discussed in the chapters on natural law) or by defect of right. This latter meant that in killing innocent life or in divorce, for example, the human agent was assuming the absolute dominion over life or marital union which belongs by right only to God. To qualify any action as intrinsically morally evil means that no intention or set of circumstances could ever justify it. Its moral quality is already determined before the person does it in whatever circumstances [10]

3. The Historical Evolution of the Concept

3.1. St Augustine and Lying

Although St Augustine never used the term *intrinsece malum* in his writings, it is apparent that he believed in the existence of certain inherently evil acts independent of the circumstances and the intention of the agent The classic example is his treatment on lying, which he regarded as one such act. In fact, it was the overpowering arguments of Augustine, particularly in his two treatises, *On Lying* (*De Mendacio*) and *Against Lying* (*Contra Mendacium*) that established the standard doctrine on lying during the Middle Ages and until the era of high casuistry.[11] The background for these two opuscula of Augustine is summed up by Feehan as follows

> He wrote the first *On Lying* to refute those Fathers of the Church who considered certain kinds of lies as sometimes licit and morally acceptable His aim of course, as is well known, was to prove that the lie is not justifiable under any circumstance In the second treatise, *Against Lying*, he was addressing a specific pastoral problem posed by certain Spanish Catholics who were dealing with an heretical sect called the Priscillianists He wrote both to refute the

[10] Richard M. GULA, *Reason Informed by Faith Foundations of Catholic Morality* New York. Paulist Press, 1989, p 268.

[11] Albert R JONSEN and Stephen TOULMIN, *The Abuse of Casuistry. A Historical Moral Reasoning* Berkeley University of California Press, 1988, p 196

> beliefs of this heretical group that lying was [illegible] conceal true faith from outsiders, and also to [illegible] zealous Catholics who were themselves resorting to lie in order to search out and capture these heretics — it brought up the intriguing notion of wanting to lie in order to trap liars.[12]

In these two treatises as well as in some of his other works, such as the *Enchiridion, De Magistro, Christian Instruction and Letters 28 and 82,* Augustine builds up his formidable position that all lies are intrinsically evil. Of all these works, it is in his *De Mendacio*, that he enunciates his famous quotation on the immorality of any type of lying, in typical Augustinian style:

> Whoever thinks, moreover, that there is any kind of lie which is not a sin deceives himself sadly when he considers that he, a deceiver of others, is an honest man.[13]

Having defined lying in such absolute terms, Augustine goes on to consider whether a lie may not in some circumstances be excusable. May a person lie, for example, to save someone else's life? To this, he replies again in typical Augustinian language. To place one's own eternal life in danger for someone else's temporal life represents an incorrect understanding of the evangelical precept of love of the neighbour.[14]

One might rightly ask: what made Augustine take such an uncompromising stand against lying? There were both theological and philosophical reasons[15] for Augustine's firm, unwavering position with regard to the immorality of all lying, irrespective of the intention or the circumstances. Among the philosophical arguments that he proposes, the natural law argument is dominant Augustine was convinced that human speech existed for the sole purpose of the communication of thought. In *De Magistro* he stresses that the very nature of external speech is such that it should mirror the internal speech or thought of the agent and thus serve simply to manifest the speaker's mind to others.[16] Obviously, then, any negation of this primary purpose of human speech is wrong:

[12]Thomas D FEEHAN, "Augustine on Lying and Deception," *Augustinian Studies* Vol 19 (1988), pp. 131-132.

[13]*De Mendacio*, c XXII as given in Roy FERRARI (ed) *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 14. Washington D.C.. Catholic University of American Press, 1952, p. 109.

[14]*De Mendacio*, 9 (CSEL 41 425-427)

[15]For a detailed discussion see Thomas FEEHAN, "The Morality of Lying in St Augustine," *Augustinian Studies* Vol 21 (1990), pp. 68-71. See also Boniface RAMSEY, "Two Traditions on Lying and Deception in the Ancient Church," *The Thomist* Vol. 49 (October 1985), p. 514.

[16]FEEHAN, "The Morality of Lying in Augustine," p 71

whoever then speaks ... contrary to what he thinks in his heart ... speech was instituted ... that each might bring his own thoughts to the knowledge of another. Hence, to use speech for deception, contrary to the purpose of its institution, is always sin.[17]

Thus, for Augustine all lying is inherently evil, and no intention or circumstances could ever justify it. That is to say that he believed in the existence of what the later tradition would call "intrinsically evil acts."

3.2. The Medieval Tradition

In an enlightening article on the moral absolutes in the writings of the predecessors of St Thomas Aquinas, John Dedek considers how some of these authors viewed what we would call *intrinsece malum* or intrinsically evil acts Having analysed briefly the authors that preceded Thomas, Dedek sums up his findings as follows:

> This medieval tradition agreed that morality is objective. A man's subjective intentions alone do not determine the moral quality of his behaviour According to this view, certain actions are good or bad in themselves In fact, some are so bad that they can never be made good. they can never be justified by any set of circumstances or any end. They are described as acts which *sine praevaricatione fieri nequeunt* (Peter of Poitiers), are *per se* evil (Peter of Poitiers, William of Paris, Albert the Great), are *in se et secundum se* bad (William of Auxerre, Hugh of St Cher, Roland of Cremona, *Summa fratris Alexandri*, Albert the Great), and have a deformity in themselves (William of Auxerre, Philip the Chancellor, Hugh of St Cher, Roland of Cremona) Examples commonly given are murder, fornication, adultery, stealing, usury, and lying.
>
> All of these actions are evil, not of course in their mere ontological existence but in their moral character; for they are actions *circa materiam indebitam* An innocent man is the wrong matter for the physical act of killing; a woman other than one's own wife is the wrong matter for the physical act of coitus; an unwilling owner is the wrong matter for the physical act of taking things.[18]

It may be worth mentioning that besides the medieval authors mentioned in the above citation, the well-known theologian who proceeded Thomas, Peter Lombard, too, viewed some actions as containing "an intrinsic morality" which made them

---

[17] *Enchiridion*, c.VII, *Fathers of the Church*, Vol 4, p 389

[18] John F. Dedek, "Moral Absolutes in the Predecessors of St Thomas," *Theological Studies* ,Vol. 38 (December 1977), pp 678-679.

evil in themselves.[19] He also considered that no intention, however good, could make up for this "inherent interior badness" of such actions.[20]

3.3. St Thomas Aquinas

St Thomas never used the expression "intrinsically evil act." But he held that some actions may never be done under any circumstances or for any end.[21] In his *Commentary on the Sentences* Thomas says that if one intends an evil end, the act is evil; but if one intends a good end the act is not necessarily good, *since it is possible for an act to be evil of itself* and as such in no way permissible.[22] The reason these acts may never be done for a good end is that they already are joined to an evil proximate end.[23] In *Quodlibet* 8, Thomas goes on to illustrate what he means and says that acts like lying and murder have an inordination inseparably joined to them, and thus, they are never to be performed.[24] Then, in his *De Malo* he says that it is not licit to steal in order to give alms, because stealing is in itself evil. The thief may have a good intention or end, but his deed or act is bad.[25] Thus, a good end cannot make certain inherently evil acts good. In the same way, says Thomas, a person who fornicates cannot justify his action by having a good intention, any more than the person who steals to give alms, because fornication according to its very nature, has an inordinate end.[26] For the same reasons, adultery and lying are never permitted, because no good intention can justify them or make them licit.[27] Even in his *Summa Theologiae* Thomas holds that certain acts are inherently evil. For example, he holds that lying is always sinful, because lying is *secundum se* evil.[28] Lying is sinful not merely because of the harm it does, but also because of its own inordi-

[19]John MAHONEY, *The Making of Moral Theology A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition*. Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1987, p. 178.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 178-179

[21]John F DEDEK, "Intrinsically Evil Acts. An Historical Study of the Mind of St Thomas," *The Thomist*, Vol 43 (July 1979), p. 387.

[22]In II *Sent.*, d. 40, q.1, a.2.

[23]*Ibid.*

[24]*Quodlibetum Octavum*, a 14.

[25]*De Malo*, q.2, ad 8.

[26]*De Malo*, q.15, a.1, ad 3.

[27]*De Malo*, q.15, a.1, ad 5.

[28]*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q.110, a.3.

[illegible].[29]

From this brief exposition of the thought of Thomas it should be clear that he would have easily accepted the existence of what tradition calls *intrinsece malum*. But, in some of his writings one can also find evidence that Thomas did indeed soften his stand as compared to Augustine. He accepted certain exceptions to the absolute moral norms (in given conditions, as we shall see below) that he so eloquently defended elsewhere. In other words, there were certain cases in which he regarded certain would-be "inherently evil acts" were not actually inherently evil, given certain conditions. The best example would be his stand on lying. As we saw above, he more or less repeats the firm opinion of Augustine on lying, saying it is always evil to lie.[30] However, one of his "seemingly simple" comments on this issue, has larger implications, and contributed immensely to the later casuistic discussions on lying, and led eventually to the formulation of what was to be known as *the mental reservation*:[31] "It is licit to hide the truth prudently by some sort of dissimulation" (*licet tamen veritatem occultare prudenter sub aliqua dissimulatione*).[32]

There are also scholars who hold that although Thomas did not reject the existence of intrinsically evil acts, he did formulate a basis for such a rejection when he made a clear-cut distinction between physical evil and moral evil (e.g., the factual notion of killing and the value notion of murder) [33] Like most of his immediate predecessors and his contemporaries, in many of his writings Thomas too dealt at length with the troubling issues found in the Bible itself, where eminent biblical figures seemed to have violated the so-called absolute moral norms, and that too with God's approval! (E.g., God had commanded Abraham to murder his innocent son Isaac, Hosea to fornicate, the Jews to steal, Jacob to lie, the Patriarchs to take concubines, and so forth.) Thomas answers by saying that because of God's supreme power and authority, an act which would have been

[29] *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q 110, a 3, ad 4

[30] *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q 110, a.3,4

[31] See JONSEN and TOULMIN, *op cit*, (see note 11), p 197

[32] *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q 110, a.3,4

[33] See for example, Franz SCHOLZ, "Problems on Norms Raised by Ethical Borderline Situations· Beginnings of a Solution in Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure," in Charles CURRAN and Richard A. McCORMICK (eds.), *Readings in Moral Theology No.1 Moral Norms and Catholic Tradition* New York. Paulist Press, 1979, pp. 158-183

theft was not theft, and an act which would have been fornication was not fornication.[34] The elaborate response which Thomas makes in his *Summa Theologiae*[35] is described by Dedek as follows:

> Here he explains that God can authorize the death of anyone, innocent or guilty, without any injustice. Also, sexual intercourse with any woman, if done under divine command, is not adultery or fornication; for adultery is sexual intercourse with someone else's wife who is so deputed by divine law. And stealing another's property under divine command is not theft; for theft implies that the owner is unwilling, and God is the owner of everything.[36]

We should note here that divine authority plays a crucial role in this response of Thomas when it comes to exceptions to the absolute moral norms, violation of which amounts to inherent or intrinsic evil. But, at the same time, we should not fail to notice also the vital role played by the distinction which Thomas makes between physical and moral evil. Words like sexual intercourse (physical notion) and adultery/fornication (moral notion) clearly imply such a distinction. Scholz verbalizes the issue at stake as follows:

> In God's comprehensive perspective an intent to kill an innocent Isaac directly is not sinful in every case but only when authorization is lacking The same is true for the sexual relations of Hosea and for the carrying off of the gold and silver vessels by the Israelites. Considered abstractly, such physical actions must be seen as value-neutral. By the additional "circumstance" of authorization they become morally permissible. Only in contrary cases, lacking authorization, are they *morally* evil. They are always and consistently deviant only in the inadequate perspective of the *cursus communis* (that is, in the ordinary course of events). If an authorization is involved — could it not lie in the broadest interpretation of *causa proportionate gravis excusans*, valid before God? — the matter (subject) changes (in a reference to the *cursus communis*, and only to this) in a moral respect. An act which in the first horizon is considered theft becomes a permitted taking when seen in the perspective of the *meaning* of the precepts: murder becomes killing, sexual transgression becomes a relation no longer in conflict with God's intent. The same physical facts of a case (like killing) can according to the circumstances (whether authorized or not) be morally permitted or forbidden. The *moral* quality thus changes without a *physical* change. That purports a "change of matter." At

[34] *De Malo*, q 15, a.1, ad 8.

[35] *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q 94, a.5, ad 2.

[36] Dedek, "Intrinsically Evil Acts." *loc.cit.*, p. 404.

bottom. Thomas applies here the *vis facti* against the possibility of "intrinsically evil acts" laid out especially in Neo-Scholasticism. He does not draw out this beginning, however; he admits in the same place intrinsically evil acts (*actiones intrinsice malae*) whose apparent insoluble monolithic unity he here dissolves by searching more deeply into an indifferent physical object and a merely additional ethically significant circumstance (authorization).[37]

Again, one should notice that for Thomas the distinction between moral and physical evil is possible only because he considers *the circumstances of the act* (e.g., divine authorization, in the biblical examples mentioned above). Precisely, it is his consideration of these circumstances that enables Thomas to justify the apparent violations of the absolute moral norms in the Bible. Thus, although he accepts the existence of intrinsically evil acts, he does not adamantly refuse to consider the circumstances, even in cases where the moral object is said to be inherently evil. Thus importance which Thomas attributes to circumstances can be seen also elsewhere, particularly when he deals with the conclusions to be drawn from natural law. His thoughts on this are summed up thus:

> Objectively speaking, the conclusions of natural law principles are not all universally applicable, since the more one descends in reasoning from general to the particular, and the more qualifications one binds into the principles, the more circumstances and counter-qualifications will also enter into consideration and affect the reaching of particular conclusions. Thus, Aquinas argued that although the first principles of natural law cannot change, the secondary precepts, which have the nature of conclusions drawn from these principles, are subject to change in a minority of practical applications according to circumstances.[38]

The relevance of all this to the theme of this essay is described again by Mahoney:

> This approach makes much of his teaching that the primary precepts of natural law are completely unchangeable, but not the secondary precepts deriving from them. It appears to be the case that for Aquinas these secondary precepts would include the Judeo-Christian Ten Commandments, and that he would consider these generally binding, but not invariably so in practice, and this because of particular factors or circumstances in reality. Thus, in a much-quoted passage, he writes that the forbidding by God of unauthorized killing, of stealing, and of adultery is unchangeable, but what is changeable is whether this or that behaviour actually

[37] SCHOLZ, *op.cit.*, pp. 172-173

[38] MAHONEY, *op.cit.*, p. 189.

constitutes murder, theft, or adultery. They may even appear to be such immoral actions, but in reality they may not be so. And if one further analyses Aquinas's thought in this direction one comes eventually to the recognition that in some cases particular circumstances can make a crucial moral difference.[39]

Thus, we may conclude that Thomas did indeed accept that there are acts which are inherently evil. However, his willingness to consider the circumstances that surrounded such acts, and his eventual distinction between the physical and moral evil of acts seem to indicate that he did not hold an absolute position with regard to what we call intrinsically evil acts.

3.4. The Moral Manuals

As mentioned in our introduction, the period of the moral manuals saw the flourishing of the concept of *intrinsece malum* in Catholic moral theology. The identification by the manualists of moral evil with the physical evil of the act[40] made such a concept easy to hold. Sabetti and Barrett, for example, spoke of the object of an act as that around which the act immediately turns and as that in which proximately and in itself the will of the agent terminates ... objective goodness or badness.[41] Gallagher illustrates the point further when he writes:

> The object of the human act was conceived in relation to the moral rather than the physical order, because it was considered explicitly as an object of moral choice. Indeed the same act could be discussed as a purely physical act, or as a pre-moral act, but when viewed as a determinant of morality it was necessarily viewed from the perspective of morality
>
> The object as a determinant of morality provided the main context in which the manualists discussed some acts as intrinsically evil, acts such as the direct destruction of the life of an innocent person, masturbation, and homosexual acts Neither the circumstances nor an agent's intention could alter the intrinsically evil nature of such acts. By their nature such acts were mortally sinful.[42]

Perhaps, it is Henry Davis, a well-known manualist of this century, who expresses best the issue at stake when he writes:

In Moral Theology we do not consider, except occasionally, sub-

[39] *Ibid*, pp. 213-314

[40] MURTAG, *op cit*, p 70

[41] Aloysio SABETTI and Timotheo BARRETT, *Compendium Theologiae Moralis*. Frederick Pustet Co:, Inc. 1939, p. 29

[42] John GALLAGHER, *Time Past, Time Future: An Historical Study of Catholic moral Theology*. New York: Paulist Press, 1990, p. 93.

jective states of mind. We deal rather with the moral act as it ought to be. This means nothing else than that there is a right order into which all human acts must be put.[43]

Writing on the object of morality, Davis says: "Objects, then, may be good or bad of their very nature, and they are then said to be intrinsically good or bad; other objects may be good or bad on account of some positive precept binding us to perform or to omit them."[44]

Accordingly, there are some acts that are inherently good or bad on account of their very object. For Davis, one such inherently evil act is sexual intercourse outside wedlock:

> ... orderly procreation can be achieved only in marriage, that is, in the indissoluble and stable union of man and woman for the begetting, the rearing and the education, physical, moral and intellectual, of offspring. If, by accident, and by reason of extraneous causes, generation cannot result in a given case, owing for example to sterility, it is still obvious from the reasoning given that man and woman outside wedlock could not, without grievous offence against nature, procure or accept this pleasure, for the reasoning is not based on the actual or possible genesis of offspring, but on the inordination of using a pleasure that has no purpose at all outside wedlock. Extrinsic and accidental circumstances cannot change the intrinsic disorder of an act, and make that indifferent which is in itself unnatural[45]

The act of lying as described by Davis is typical of the manualist way of describing *intrinsece malum* acts·

> Lying is the expression of thoughts that are contrary to intellectual conviction. Therefore the essence of a lie is the contradiction between the outward expression and the interior conviction. The social effect of the lie is to deceive Its primary and essential immortality is not, however, based on the violation of the rights of others to the truth nor on the social harm that lying inflicts. A lie is intrinsically, and necessarily, by its very nature, contrary to the law of Nature and is, therefore, a morally evil act. The essence of the evil of lying consists in the abuse of the faculty of speech, for the primary purpose of speech is to reveal what is in the mind, whereas, in lying, that purpose is frustrated in the very act of speech[46]

Murtagh who did a thorough study of the concept of intrin-

[43]Henry DAVIS, *Moral and Pastoral Theology Human Acts, Law, Sin, Virtue*. Vol.I (3rd & rev ed) London Sheed and Ward, 1938, p 54

[44]*Ibid.*, p 55.

[45]Henry DAVIS, *Moral and Pastoral Theology: Commandments of God, Precepts of the Church*, Vol. 2 (2nd & rev. ed) London. Sheed and Ward, 1936, p. 178.

[46]*Ibid*, pp 380-381

sic evil in the moral manuals, describes what this concept in general meant for the manualists as follows:

> As far as the moral manuals are concerned, it serves the purpose of distinguishing evil acts from acts which are indifferent but forbidden; it is an emphatic way of saying that the act is morally evil.[47]

Murtagh gives eight examples of such acts selected from the manuals: murder, suicide, duelling, pollution ("deliberate emission of seed outside of the marriage act"), fornication, sterilization-mutilation, lie, obscene literature.

The concept of *intrinsece malum* had a very prominent place in the manualist period, and it was during this period that major magisterial teaching documents began to use this concept, as we shall see later.

(to be concluded)

[47]MURTAGH, *op.cit.*, p 28 For a detailed discussion of how this concept was treated by the manualists, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see pp 13-29.

Concluded from p 616

tuality and forge a new relation of the Church to the world This new way of being Church is not in the pattern of colonialism (institutions) but of a communitarian Christianity characterised by the will to serve rather than the search of centralised power Radically this is the approach of Jesus: to be with the last, to respond to the challenges of the oppressed cultural reality, to defend the life and culture of the poor

P.A. JOSEPH, OFM, Cap.
Shanti Sadan
P.O Sajjangarh-327602

VJTR 58 (1994) 604-607

Listen to the Spirit

Solidarity of Nations

United Nations Day — 24 October

Our century witnesses the development of international organizations on a spectacular scale. Increasing spheres of human life have outgrown local and national borders and become the common concern of other nations, of all nations. The trend towards international solidarity became tangible first in the workers' movement. Already in 1864 the national socialist parties and trade-unions joined hands in the first "internationale" in London. In the context of warfare, conventions between nations for humanitarian concerns were needed to mitigate the furies of violence and cruelty for the civil population and also for soldiers. They began with the The Hague Peace Conference of 1899, and the conventions were gradually extended and specified.

After the disaster of the First World War an attempt was made to foster international harmony and collaboration on a political level. It led to the formation in 1919 of the Geneva-based League of Nations with the aim of preventing wars; it became part of the Treaty of Versailles. But soon it proved inadequate. The experience of the Second World War, the ever growing complexity of international relations and the urgent need of settling disputes between the nations finally led to the foundation of the United Nations through the charter signed in San Francisco on 26.6 1945 which entered into force on 24 October 1945. Its seat would be in New York. It replaced the League of Nations. Its scope is to preserve world peace and assure security through collective measures, to settle disputes; to foster friendly relations between nations on the basis of equal rights and self-determination; to foster international collaboration in economic, social and cultural spheres, and to promote human rights without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, language or religion

The United Nations Day may invite us to read the concluding chapters of the Council's Constitution on "The Church in the Modern World" which speak of the transformation of human society from individual nations to a global community. With the rapid increase of communication, migration, international economy and trade, a network of interdependence is being woven which makes national isolation impossible, calls for lasting bonds and demands a new mentality This is the message of the final section of *Gaudium et Spes*.

The immediate concern of the Council was peace. It had gathered in the chilly climate of the "cold war" when world peace was based on

mutual fear of the destructive potential of the enemy. A different foundation of peace was needed, the "establishment of some universal public authority, acknowledged as such by all, endowed with effective power to safeguard, on behalf of all, security, regard for justice and respect for rights" (GS 82). As long as such an authority is not established the existing international centres have to work vigorously for common security.

However, wars cannot be prevented by authority alone: "If peace is to be established the primary requisite is to eradicate the causes of dissension between peoples ... excessive economic inequalities ... quest for power, contempt of personal rights." To combat such evils "it is altogether necessary that international institutions cooperate" (83). "It is necessary for the family of nations to create for themselves an order which corresponds to modern obligations, particularly with reference to the numerous regions still labouring under intolerable need" (84).

The international development of the secular society becomes a challenge to Christians: "(They) should collaborate willingly and wholeheartedly in establishing an international order involving genuine respect for all, freedom and amicable fellowship between all people" (88). "The Church must be thoroughly present in the midst of the community of nations ... both through her public institutions and through the full and sincere collaboration of all Christians, a collaboration motivated solely by the desire to be of service to all" (89). In this effort Catholics must be united with all Christians and be ready to collaborate with all people, believers and non-believers, even with those who "oppress the Church." It must be an universal effort for the unity of the human family (92).

These texts express not only the Council's concern for adequate structures of the emerging solidarity of all nations, but also point at the specific Christian approach to worldwide solidarity: it is not enough to prevent armed conflict between nations but an order based on mutual respect and justice must be established; special consideration must be given to nations who are in greater need and therefore unable to assert themselves in the community of nations; legal and administrative structures are needed, but must be supported by the spirit of solidarity and mutual responsibility; nations must be motivated to collaboration not by the subtle desire to increase their own power and to control others but by the genuine wish to build up mutual solidarity. Such comprehensive collaboration demands freedom from the prejudices and antagonisms inherited from history.

This vision of international collaboration seemed a distant dream at the time of the Council, in the deep winter of the cold war. All effective cooperation between nations was blocked by the veto-right of the superpowers in the Security Council. The situation has changed in the past years: when the Iron Curtain was lifted, a bewildering scene of hidden hostilities which had been suppressed was revealed. At the

same time in Africa tribal clashes erupted which had been smouldering under colonial rule and, at times, fostered by it. Thus the United Nations have emerged as the only peace keeping force on earth. Through our media we watch its struggle against the tide of destruction which sweeps over the earth: we watch it with disappointment about the actual results, we see more clearly its actual needs, we are aware of the slow development of a new mentality in our generation.

The disappointments come to us daily through the media. Names are not needed — at the time when these lines reach our readers, they may have to be changed. Ever new scenes of disaster appear on the flickering screen of our TV sets: soldiers and rebels killed in battle, people worn out by starvation, illness, desolation; ever-swelling streams of refugees flowing over national borders; women hiding their face; children reduced to skeletons There are other scenes· conference buildings, negotiation tables, armistices concluded and broken, frustration and helplessness.

All realize that these are only the beginnings of the mission of the United Nations. Serious mistakes have been made — but the UNO is open to criticism and assessment The suspicion will always remain that the organisation is being used by leading powers to carry out their policies Effective controls are needed. Most of all its has become abundantly clear that this organisation set up to keep peace, guarantee security and create solidarity is not yet sufficiently equipped for this task. The material resources are inadequate, the legal basis is too weak The precarious balance between the sovereignty of the single nations and the right or the duty of UNO to step in during emergencies must still be found The military resources of UNO consist of small national units which stand under the control of their national governments. Boutros Gali asks for a contingent of 50,000 men under UNO control so as be able effectively to step in during a crisis The UNO is still in its beginnings

As we watch its struggle against the chaotic powers of destruction in ever new regions we should be conscious that we witness the greatest ever experiment of human history· a dream begins to be realized before our eyes, the dream of a world authority, not imposed from outside but born from the imperatives of survival: to stop the shedding of blood, to dry the streams of tears flowing over the earth, to heal, to reconcile Will the UN succeed? The ancient vision of holy books is enacted on the secular stage of our world: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares" (Is 2·4).

While we watch the groping efforts to establish a community of nations we feel already the beginning of a new era. The rigid insistence on national sovereignty is balanced by a sense of solidarity. Relations to other nations are not simply "foreign" affairs but are part of the national life. The new mentality becomes most tangible in the self-understanding of the armed forces: formerly soldiers were recruited

and trained only for the defence of his own country; today the must be ready for the service of the human family. All member states of the UNO must send contingents of the army to distant countries to carry out missions of peace or service: to watch disputed border areas; supervise cease-fire agreements; protect civilians in war zones; to supply humanitarian help, food and medical supplies in distress situations; to supervise fair elections in critical situations, etc. An example is the contribution of Austria (being myself an Austrian I hesitate to mention it, yet it is a helpful illustration): this country with a population of only 8 millions, in forty years sent army contingents on forty-five UNO missions all over the world. 34000 soldiers were involved, 27 lost their lives. In such missions the motive is widened from national patriotism to the service of peace and well-being of the one human family. Thus the UNO stands not only for an organisation but for the emerging vision of universal solidarity.

This secular process of emerging solidarity of all nations is significant also for our faith and for the life and mission of the Church. The universality of God's reign is a biblical theme and is enshrined in the Creed as a mark of the Church. But the empirical basis of "catholicity" in the Bible is small. The Jesus movement concerned first only Jews but the Christian message soon opened up to the Mediterranean world. The struggle was hard. It was the first test whether faith in Jesus Christ transcends national and cultural barriers and can free itself even from traditional forms of religious practice. For nearly 2000 years the Church got stuck within this limited catholicity of the Mediterranean world enlarged only marginally through the elements of Germanic cultures when it reached out to the North. It remained European and carried western culture to the nations along with its spiritual message.

With the emerging consciousness of secular universalism we begin to understand that also in Christian life "inculturation" is needed, the genuine self-expression of faith in the cultural and religious milieu of the nations of the world. This is more difficult for the Church now at her age of 2000 years than it was in the early days of her childhood. The formulae of our faith are sanctioned by ecumenical councils and our ethics have been linked, inseparably it seems, with western frames of society and family The African Synod of this year has shown how difficult it is to be "catholic" today and to recognize different patterns and styles of life; but it is necessary. The Council has pointed at the parallel development of secular universalism and the universal mission of the Church. To play her role in building up a new world community "we must in the first place foster within the Church herself mutual esteem, reverence and harmony through the full recognition of lawful diversity" (GS 92).

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Statement

Statement of the Catholic Priests' Conference of India (CPCI) on GATT

1. One of the aims and objectives of CPCI is "to enable the Church in India to respond to the signs of the times in the emerging socio-political situation of our country" (CPCI Statutes, art. 4.4). The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) signed on April 15, 1994 at Marrakesh, Morocco, is going to have far-reaching consequences on the life of the Indian nation. To reflect on this, the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) of CPCI organised a seminar in January, 1994. The Executive Committee of CPCI which met in Mangalore in May 1994 issues the following Statement.

2. It is to be stated at the outset that this Statement is made not because of our expertise but because of the realisation that the democratic system can become a farce when the citizens fail to keep track of the functioning of the decision-making machinery It is important that individuals and groups have an opinion on every important issue that emerges in the country and come out openly so that people can take a correct decision. This applies all the more to highly complex subjects like the GATT. Everyone has to make an effort to understand the issues involved, guided of course by experts, raise questions and register their opinion and protest when necessary. Failure in this regard will surely be at our expense It is in this spirit that we, though lay persons regarding the subject we are dealing with, express our point of view.

3. GATT has to be seen along with World Bank and International Monetary Fund, agencies envisaged for post-war reconstruction in developed countries It is these which serve as instruments of neo-colonisation by imperialist forces — to get free access to the natural resources and markets of developing countries. These have been used to systematically marginalize the UN and UNCTAD where the poorer nations have a greater say

4. The discussions for the new GATT have been necessitated by the recession and unemployment that developed countries experienced in the early eighties. The agenda was set by these countries. They try to resolve their crisis by transferring it on to us. Even a study jointly conducted by the World Bank and the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development estimates that the gain from the implementation of the present agreement will be 213 billion dollars in 2002, of which 141.8 billion dollars will be for the developed countries. Africa, a food-importing continent will, on the contrary, suffer a loss of 2.6 billion dollars. This gives an idea of who will benefit most and at whose expense.

5. We understand that we had three sets of objectives when we joined the Uruguay Round of negotiations. We wanted to dismantle the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) by which the developed countries practised protectionism against our textile goods and to provide for labour mobility from our country to the developed ones. Even though it has been proposed to abolish MFA, the long drawn out dismantling arrangement will be to the disadvantage of our country. The first seven years, there may not be any discernible gains for us. In the first nine years, only 51% will be integrated in the agreement. In the background of our experience of the MFA being extended by USA in scope and duration, anything can happen in ten years.

6. The danger of MFA not being phased out is very real given the fact that cross retaliation is provided for in the new GATT. On the pretext that countries like India do not observe GATT provisions in other areas like Intellectual Property Rights, the USA and developed nations may continue to close their doors to our textile exports.

7. As regards labour mobility, we have not gained anything. GATT is meant for the removal of restrictions for the mobility of services. The Labour part of the services has not been brought into this multilateral agreement while the developed countries have succeeded in including the technology part of it.

8. Secondly, we wanted to maintain the status quo as regards the previous agreement where a certain differential treatment for developing countries had been recommended. But unfortunately this has not been achieved. In the present agreement, there is a special provision only for the least developed countries in which India is not included.

9. Finally, we wanted to minimise the damage as regards trade related Intellectual Property Rights and agriculture. Here again, we have, to a large extent, failed to defend our rights.

10. Our patent rights were meant for fourteen years only. In the case of process patents for food and medicine the period is five to seven years But the present agreement extends it to twenty years. Given the fact that the rate of obsolescence of technology is going up, the monopoly of patent holders on new technology will be complete. Very little transfer of technology will take place. This will adversely affect the attempts at industrialisation and self-reliance on the part of developing countries

11 Previously, the owner of a patent had the obligation to use the patented technology for commercial production in the country that gives the patent. Now this is not necessary. The finished product can be imported. This would mean the further erosion of the economic power of the developing countries since as it happened in the colonial days these countries will serve only as the market for the products of developed countries without any transfer of technology. This will also adversely affect the employment-generation efforts.

12. In the GATT, as far as pharmaceuticals are concerned the patent

[illegible] a [illegible] attitude regarding social change. It is this profit motive that has made our society commit the crime of selling for money the natural resources given by God for the use of all. We have similarly made human labour a commodity. Now this is being extended to the human patrimony. Innovation of technology has been taking place from time immemorial not out of profit motive alone. Therefore the GATT provisions for Intellectual Property Rights are anti-social and unchristian. All people of good will must put up a strong resistance.

23. In this context it is really regrettable that the Church in general and the Church in India in particular have not made any serious effort to interpret this treaty in the light of God's Word. It is only such an interpretation and a corresponding involvement that will give certain direction to the world to realize God's plan. Otherwise we will be treading the path chalked out for us by the powers that be, powers that are opposed to God's Kingdom. For GATT is an important phase in the neo-colonial plunder and exploitation of people and in tampering with the sovereignty of individual nations.

24. The ambiguous role played by the Church when nations were colonized will be repeated at this stage of neo-colonialism if the Christian community continues to maintain indifference to the consequences of GATT. Taking a diplomatic stand of neutrality for promoting religious interests when important Kingdom values are involved will jeopardize the genuine mission of the church.

25. The Church is aware that greater justice has to be brought about in international agreements. Paul VI has said in *Populorum Progressio*: "In order that international trade be human and moral social justice requires that it restore to the participants a certain equality of opportunity This equality is a long-term objective, but to reach it we must begin now to create true equality in discussions and negotiations" (No 61) John Paul II said in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* "The international trade system today frequently discriminates against the products of the young industries of the developing countries and discourages the producers of raw-materials" (No. 43). Why then is it that during the crucial stage of GATT negotiations, the Vatican did not apply its moral power? Does not this omission put the credibility of the Vatican in serious doubt as regards its concern for international justice?

26. One would have expected that one of the specific contributions of international Religious Congregations was to promote justice among nations. The GATT negotiations have shown the near total absence of this dimension at least as regards the Religious Orders working in India. Missionaries from developed countries are more interested in doing some charity to us than in influencing public opinion in their home countries to work out just trade relations. Neither are missionaries from India engaged in promoting similar ventures. They are rather used to man institutions of ageing Congregations. This is reprehensible

27. The absence of any relevant faith-reflection on the current social situation like GATT is due to the fact that the laity are denied their due place in the Church. It is necessary that structures be established in which involved lay people will come out with a Christian stand — which will always be a human stand — regarding social issues.

28. The CPCI on its part appeals to all its members, its diocesan and regional units, to initiate and support ways and means of educating the people regarding the implications of GATT and of influencing decision-making to set right the injustice built into the treaty. For, though we have missed important moments, it is not yet too late. In accordance with the GATT treaty, new laws will have to be made or old ones modified. No law should be allowed to be enacted which will adversely affect our country as a whole or the poor in it.

29. GATT is itself a loose treaty which provides ample room for manoeuvring. Our political leadership has to be shaken out of its stupor and made to realise that all is not well. It should be pressurised to put up resistance, jointly with other developing countries, to armtwisting by multinational corporations and their political allies. This is possible only through mass action.

30. Specifically, CPCI members should conscientise parishioners about what is happening and encourage them to join hands with mass movements. In a special way, at the diocesan or district levels, independent study committees of experts could be established so that the holes be exposed in the misinformation campaign engaged in by official media and those of the monopoly capitalists. There is a great need to provide correct information to the people.

31. Similarly, the diocesan and regional Commissions for Justice and Peace should be encouraged to come out with statements in the preparation of which the legitimate leadership role of the laity should be ensured.

32 What is before us is a problem that is highly complicated. The complex nature may dissuade us from pronouncing any judgement on international trade, leaving that to experts. But the consequences are borne by the ordinary people. The sight of the Goliaths of Multi-National corporations, trade cartels and developed countries can frighten us to a defeatist attitude. Both these are dangerous, immature and unchristian approaches. We must have the discerning spirit which will sustain us as we go through the maze of conflicting information supplied to us. It will provide us with the prudence to weigh matters basing them upon fundamental concerns of life. This spirit will give us the courage to say aloud what our findings are and the simplicity to revise our position when the unfolding of events calls for such a revision. This is possible only when we have faith in the Lord, hope in the future and love for all, for everything and for the whole.

33. May the Spirit who has prompted us to take a stand on such an important issue, inspire all to take their destiny in their hands and remove all obstacles, both structural and personal, that stand in the way of the realisation of God's Kingdom!□

Book Reviews

Reference Works

A Dictionary of Devotions. By Michael WALSH. Kent: Burns & Oates 1993. Pp. 366. ISBN 0-86012-179-8.

As the author explains in the introduction, by the word 'Devotions' he means "the private pieties and practices of individuals, and not those religious practices which are enjoined upon Christians at large by the requirements of their Churches" like the Mass, the Divine Office, etc. (p. 7) The author lists also a number of shrines and centres of devotions, pious associations, sacred objects used in devotions like the rosary or the scapular, words and phrases connected with devotions like 'reparation', popular hymns like 'Silent Night', 'Adeste Fideles', a number of patron saints, etc Being all in one volume the entries are limited in number and in size — between three lines and five pages ('saints'). The majority are about 10-15 lines

Note that Pilar is entered under 'Pillar, Our Lady of' and that though it is true that the Feasts of St Gabriel and St Raphael introduced in the Roman Calendar in 1921 have since been 'removed' from the Calendar, one could mention that both the archangels are commemorated together with St Michael on September 29th, thus changing the character of this feast (see under 'Michael the Archangel')

The Dictionary cannot be exhaustive It throws light on a limited area of devotional life. It has a good index, but the four and a half page Bibliography is sketchy and not always so relevant. The twenty-seven page Appendix comparing the liturgical calendar before and after 1970 is also really somewhat out of place.

A dispensable book, it can however provide concrete information on specific points one occasionally needs to check up

M.V. AMALANATHAN, S.J.

The Liturgical Dictionary of Eastern Christianity. By Peter DAY. Kent: Burns and Oates, 1993. Pp, viii-334. ISBN 0-86012-216-6.

The title of the book sufficiently shows its content. It consists of around 2000 entries mostly on liturgical gestures or paraphernalia used in the various forms of Eastern Christianity. The notes are short, often a couple of lines, generally one para or even upto one page Exceptionally, one or other, like *Holy Orders* covering the various oriental churches, may have up to six pages.

Useful within its limits, the Dictionary gets confused about the Indian oriental churches There is a *Syro-Malabar Rite* entry which begins with the shape of the chasuble and ends with the Lenten fast starting two days before Ash Wednesday Another entry is *Syro-Malabarese* (sic) of which the Catholic section is said to follow the East-Syrian rite, and a *Syro-Malankarese* (sic) which uses the West Syrian liturgical rite (p 283) But in the Appendix on liturgical languages (p 331) the "Malankara" rite is classified under the *Antiochene (West Syrian)* tradition while the "Syro-Malankarese" rite is under the *Chaldean (East Syrian)* tradition There is no Syro-Malabar or -Malabarese in this table Other appendixes give various names used in the different oriental churches for English ecclesiastical terms (abbess, abbot, alb, altar. .), or tables of Byzantine Habits, Divine Office, Liturgical books, Sacraments, Vestments A book with a limited scope for specialised students

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J

A New Dictionary of Saints. Compiled by Donald ATTWATER. Edited and revised by John CUMMING. Kent. Burns & Oates, 1993 Pp. 332. n.p. ISBN 0-86012-207-7.

Of more popular use than the previous book is The *New* Dictionary of

Saints, known from 1938 as *A Dictionary of Saints*, now revised and updated. It contains all the known saints and blessed venerated in the Catholic Church through the ages, except those specifically suppressed in 1969 on account of lack of historical evidence.

Each entry gives the name, the status (St., Bl., Martyr, Bishop, Abbot, Virgin..), a short account of the life or of the tradition about the person(s), the year of their death, the year of canonization or beatification as the case may be, the date on which the saint/blessed is venerated in the Catholic Church, and where applicable the volume and page where more information about the person may be found in Butler's *Lives of the Saints* (as revised by H. Thurston and D. Attwater) The list includes SS Barlaam and Josaphat who "never existed Their legend is a Christianized version of that of Siddartha Buddha" (sic! I suppose the Buddha existed!) It includes also St Gonsalo Garcia "who was b. near Bombay, perhaps of Indian parents, in which case he would be the only Indian yet formally canonized," Bl Kuriakose Chavara, "the first Indian *beatus*" and Bl Alphonsa Mattahupadathus (sic!, read Muttathupadathu) "of the Syro-Malabar rite the first Indian *beata* " A book to have at hand for easy reference, updating its predecessor of 1938-1958 and complementing the more Protestant-Britain oriented *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* by D H Farmer (Oxford 1978)

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Justice

Church and Social Justice. By George V Lobo S.J. Anand; Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1993, Pp. xii-170 Rs 33.

This is a collection of articles on various areas of social justice by the late Professor of Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune. The themes dealt with are: The Church's Social Mission after Vatican II; Religion and Politics, Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis; A Commentary on Rome's Document on Liberation Theology; Social Sin in the Teachings of the Church; The Teaching of the Church on Human Rights; Baptismal Initiation and Communalism; and Church and Communalism in India.

The Church has been always involved in society, but with a greater emphasis after the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XIII After Vatican II there has been a shift from the natural law approach of Leo XIII to a theological focus taking into account the nature of the Church and its role in the world. The Church's social mission is interwoven with its identity, the social question becoming a theological question. The Church's mission has to include an active engagement to promote human dignity, to defend human rights, and to build just societies. Religion can play the role either of transforming society or of dividing it by contributing to communal conflicts As a sacrament of unity, the Church has to vigorously fulfil a prophetic role and strive for justice and liberation. This may cause a dialectical tension between dynamic Christians and a placid hierarchy In the context of structural injustice, the Church has to recognise and support the rights of the poor in their struggle for liberation The Asian Church needs to shed its western image and take pride in being native without excessive nationalism.

Lobo explains the birth and growth of liberation theology in its evolutionary stages. Liberation theology revealed the inadequacy of an abstract and ahistorical theology that was (is) bound to/enslaved by oppressive structures. A theology for humanity has to be praxis-based and praxis-oriented, calls for a socio-analytical mediation, a hermeneutical mediation (re-reading the scriptures) and a praxis mediation (in the context of the grinding poverty of the masses and human right violations). In the teachings of the Church there is today a greater emphasis on social sin in the context of the solidarity needed

for building a just society.

Social analysis should be deep and comprehensive, making use of the findings of modern psychology, etc. The baptismal initiation should lead to a better sense of a personal conversion so as to be immersed in the depth of human problems and also accept the call and election of all and the existence and function of other religious experiences. There should not be the idea of separation which leads to communalism. The Church has to fulfil her role as a sacrament of the unity of all peoples and become the leaven and soul of human society, transcending denominational barriers and differences.

This selection of articles has published to commemorate the 100th year of *Rerum novarum* of Leo XIII. Useful for students of theology and for social workers

P.A. JOSEPH, OFM Cap.

Good News to the Poor, A New Evangelization. By Leonard Boff Translated from the Portuguese by Robert R. Barr London: Burns and Oates, 1992. Pp. xvi-128. ISBN 0 86012-1976.

Boff deals in this book with the New Evangelization as a debt to Latin America. The book has three parts: the first part deals with the relation of culture and Gospel in Latin American. The second part studies evangelization as a liberative undertaking stressing, as Indian theologians have done in the past, that the Triune God always arrives before the missionary; that the eternal Word incarnate and raised, is always active in cultures; that the Holy Spirit is the divine imagination in cultures leading toward a Church with mestizo features. The third part judges the failure of the first evangelization and its absence of dialogue with native religions; but also on the positive side, Las Casas's peaceful evangelization and the liberative method of the Dark Virgin, and looks towards the building of a culture of life and freedom together.

The topics are dealt with in small chapters. Much light is thrown on culture. True evangelization cannot ignore or replace the culture of the people. The Gospel is not to be proclaimed on the ruins of culture, but has to find its existence, relevance and meaning in each culture. The agent of the good news needs an indepth understanding of the Gospel on the one hand and the native culture on the other. This was the method of Jesus. Any shortcircuiting is anything but evangelization.

Boff stresses four aspects of evangelization. 1. To evangelise means to bear testimony to a vision of respect and acceptance of all cultures and the divine work within culture The stress must be given to *life*, and not to things accidental. 2. The religion of the culture being evangelised must be accepted because religion is the soul of culture. 3 Evangelization must produce good news, good news as given by Jesus in different contexts to different individuals and people The kernel of the good news is the *triumph of life* in Jesus Christ The resurrection is more than triumph of life, it is *transformation* of life. 4 To evangelize is to celebrate It is the essence of Christianity to celebrate through the warp and woof of life the presence of the One who was raised. The eucharistic celebration is of prime importance, its form and meaningful pattern depending upon each culture, country, etc.

In the concluding part of the volume the author gives some perspectives for evangelization. evangelization is the fundamental mission of the Church; the Church has to learn the real situation of the people and adapt the gospel message to today's human beings in a dynamic, attractive and convincing way; the basic Christian communities have a great role in spreading the good news of Jesus the liberator of the human condition and they show a new way of being Church; they generate a new spiri-

concluded on page 586

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Vol. LVIII OCTOBER 1994 No. 10

VJTR 58 (1994) 617-622

Ahimsâ and the Love Commandment

Anto PORUTHUR, S.V.D.

On October 2nd India and the world celebrated the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi On this occasion the author studies the contexts in which Gandhi's ahimsâ and Jesus' Love Commandment emerged and their affinities The study completes one published exactly 25 years ago in VJTR's predecessor *The Clergy Monthly*, besides many other articles on Gandhiji published before or after that date The first reference to Gandhi recorded in the decennial tables of the Journal comes in the editorial of Volume 6, December 1942 Fr Anto is Chairman of the Commission for Ecumenism and Dialogue in the Delhi Archdiocese and Secretary of the Abhishiktananda Society, an interreligious association of dialogue. His residence is at Sadbhavan SVD House, 259 F Pocket I, Mayur Vihar Ph I, Delhi 110091

Successful crusader for the removal of apartheid in South Africa Nelson Mandela, environmental activist Petra Kelly, champion of the US Black cause Martin Luther King, thinker and writer Ivan Illich and many other leaders in recent history have drawn inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948). Many of them have been explicit in acknowledging their indebtedness to him.

Although Gandhi experienced frequent incarceration by the British during the struggle for independence he did not entertain bitter feeling towards them. Nor did he drift from his chosen path of non-violence even under provocation. He made a clear distinction between the brand of religion practised by the colonial rulers and the essential teaching of Jesus Christ. Therefore he did not harbour resentment against Christianity as such.

What made those great people turn to Gandhi when the West was proud of a variety of self-sufficient ideologies to guide its political and social life? Can the conceptual model based on

ahimsâ as understood and lived by Gandhi and the love commandment taught by Jesus be brought together? The present article is a search for a synthesis and an attempt to build a bridge stressing the similarities between the two traditions.

Influences on Gandhi

Many rivers have contributed to the emergence of the Gandhian philosophy. The Mahatma's ideal of ahimsâ was formulated out of the flow of these tributaries having their sources in various religions. Ignoring the layers of traditions formed around them, Gandhi swam upstream to probe into the core teachings and reinterpreted their meaning for the Indian situation.

Undoubtedly the Hindu religion was closest to Gandhi's heart. In its scriptures ahimsâ is considered a cardinal virtue. In the Laws of Manu it is written as follows· "Let him patiently hear hard words Let him not insult any body Against an angry man let him not in return show anger Let him bless when he is cursed."[1]

According to Mahabharata, "Ahimsâ is the highest religion. It is again the highest penance It is also the highest truth from which all duty proceeds."[2] Regular recitation of these verses helped Gandhi to imbibe and assimilate their content

Gandhi considered the Gita his spiritual reference book for almost 60 years.[3] The following text which extols the virtue of non-violence, has been a source of inspiration for Gandhi:

> I foresee no good will come from killing my own kindred in war Even though they slay me, I wish not to strike them How can we be happy, having slain our own kindred though they, with hearts deadened with avarice, see not the evil that will come? (1 31, 35,37)

Non-violence is an article of faith for the ascetics. The sum and substance of Jaina teaching is as follows: "All beings hate pain. Therefore one should not kill them This is the quintessence of wisdom, not to kill anything."[4] Gandhi's father, though a Vaishnavite, had very close associations with Jain Sadhus. This doctrine percolated into the mind of Mohandas from his

[1] T.K. MAHADEVAN, ed , *The Relevance of Gandhi*, p 4

[2] Quoted in Gopinath DHAVAN, *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1951, p. 10.

[3] Cf *Young India*, II, pp. 1078-79

[4] *Sutra-Kritanga Sutra*, 1.11.9-19.

family and surroundings.

A Gujarati poem which Gandhiji had learned by heart in his childhood had left a profound impression on his life. The English rendering of it is as follows: "If a man gives you a drink of water and you give him a drink in return that is nothing. Real beauty consists in doing good against all evil."[5]

Often Islam is perceived as a violent religion as it uses coercion. But Gandhi approached it with an open and unbiased mind. According to him the most significant contribution of Islam to humanity is its spirit of fellowship. "The spirit of brotherhood is manifested in no other religion as clearly as in Islam."[6]

The Mahatma has duly acknowledged the role played by Jesus Christ in the formulation of his philosophy of life:

> Jesus Christ played a great part in my life; unconsciously how much, I do not know; consciously how much I do know. When I began to read the Sermon on the Mount, I felt the beauty of it ... the presentation is unique ... So many of my words are chosen from the Bible I am unable to speak without reference to it.[7]

New Intepretation of Ahimsâ

Ahimsâ is traditionally understood as a negative concept of doing no harm to any creature and in this sense it is passive. But Gandhiji, besides retaining its conventional meaning as found in the common Indian terminology, developed an entirely new understanding of it. Taking the cue from the Gujarati poem mentioned earlier, he maintained that ahimsâ means not only to avoid causing injury but also positively to do good to others.

One has to be quite clear about one's motive while doing good to others and thus practising ahimsâ. As exhorted by the Gita, Gandhi maintained that one has to be fortified by a self-effacing detachment from the results (*nishkâma karma*) and be free from the encumbrances of attachment to reach the shores of Truth. At a certain stage he had developed a conviction that his was the true philosophy of the Gita: "I somehow or other fancy that my 'philosophy' represents the true meaning of the teaching of Gita."[8]

---

[5]Quoted in A. HINGORANI, ed., *The Science of Satyagraha*, p. 1.
[6]*Gandhi's Correspondence with Government*.
[7]*Ibid.*
[8] [illegible]

The Mahatma also incorporated into the ideal of ahimsa the strong conviction of the Moslems on human brotherhood.[9] For him to develop a social consciousness, a concern for fellow human beings is a prerequisite. This understanding Gandhi owed to the concept of universal fellowship stressed by Islam.

The Love Commandment

Human beings can be allured by the forces of power, wealth and also can develop an obsession for sexual pleasures. These can keep them enslaved and consequently far away from God. So the love commandment (Mt 22.37-38) exhorts us to love God without any reservation.

The second precept, i.e., loving one's neighbour as oneself (Mt 22:39), presupposes the fundamental psychological principle that human beings have a basic love for themselves The ideal proposed is to have the same kind of love for one's neighbour, who can be the one next door, somebody a floor above or below, or some one in faraway Rwanda in need of our immediate attention and perhaps help

This understanding of neighbour is not guided by gender bias. It calls for living in communion with those who carry human excreta on their heads, or do the dirty job of handling carcasses to earn their daily bread. It does not agree to banishing leprosy or AIDS patients to desolate and God-forsaken colonies Nor does it keep the widows away just because their very sight is considered a bad omen.

To live according to the love commandment is hard indeed. It cannot to be limited to a close circle of friends It goes beyond cozy personal relationships It calls for loving even one's detractors, critics and perhaps sworn enemies (Mt 5 44)

The acme of perfection of loving one's neighbour consists in forgiving those who have harmed us physically or caused us mental pain and anguish, perhaps by slander or calumny, and reconciling ourselves with them and proceeding a step further not only to wish them well but also to do positive good to them (Mt 5.48)

Loving the neighbour implies a harmonious existence with other human beings. Conflicts will then be on the decrease and

[9]It is a fact that even an employer and employee, if they are followers of Islam, would eat from the same plate, the same dishes.

if they do arise they are resolved amicably. At the same time humans can no longer afford to be at war with nature. As human life is becoming more and more complex and its close relationship with the plant and animal life, and with the environment in general, is better understood today, a consciousness that the sub-human forms of life are part of the one's neighbourhood has to be created.

Similarities between Ahimsâ and the Love Commandment

Gandhi's ideal of ahimsâ resembles Jesus' love commandment in more ways then one. Both of them are considered to be practical ideals. They also imply a particular kind of relationship between means and end. The end is said to be the transcendental ideal. For Gandhi it was Satya, for Jesus it was God.

Living according to the practical ideal of ahimsâ is a must to arrive at the transcendental goal Without loving one's neighbour one cannot reach God (1 Jn 4:20). If anyone makes tall claims about realization of the Absolute in his/her life without treading the arduous path of ahimsâ/love such talk will be empty of substance (1 Cor 13.1-3) So both ideals stress the need for a sound moral foundation to be able to ascend to the heights of experiencing the Ultimate Reality.

The ideals of ahimsâ and of love are born out of a relentless search They have their origin in human life Both are meant to promote the welfare of human beings They are universally accepted principles cutting across ethnic or religious boundaries and are also cherished aspirations of humanity as such.

Both appeal to reason and therefore they can be put into practice by any one, irrespective of caste, creed, race or sex. Ahimsâ and love are values that can be considered outside the purview of any religious system. On the conceptual front they can be critically examined and applied to a wide variety of human situations

On the level of human relationships ahimsâ and love stress the primacy of good will. Even when provoked and thus under stress those who live by these ideals are expected not to develop any ill-will against the provoker but to maintain equanimity of mind. Both ideals urge us to love the enemy and thus one is not expected to repay evil for evil but win over evil by good.

Jesus' commandment of love is found to have originated

when humanness was at a low premium and was replaced by extreme legalism. The Mosaic Law had deteriorated to the level of mere observances and often led to hypocrisy. In such a context the love commandment was a corrective measure to put the life of human beings back on the track of honesty and dignity.

In the same way when India was on the brink of becoming a burning communal cauldron and Hindus got suspicious of the Moslems and vice versa and both sides started destroying property and killing one another without rhyme or reason, Gandhi managed to bring about amity and peace by the healing touch of ahimsâ. He undertook a mission of reconciliation after the partition of the country.

Facing a frontal attack on his views from his fellow religionists and withstanding the brunt of criticism from his political allies, Gandhi remained utterly convinced of the efficacy of ahimsâ, and stood as a tower of strength in the hour of tribulation for both the Hindus and Moslems alike, without any discrimination and till his last breath In this manner he upheld the supremacy of human life over religious prejudice.

Both ahimsâ and the love commandment can be regarded as integrated sets of values In the former, values like non-violence, brotherhood, tolerance, kindness, etc , merge In the love commandment values like care and concern for others, equality of all human beings, forbearance, forgiveness and reconciliation are synthesized Both ideals are a congeries of values

Conclusion

Gandhiji was able to spell out a socio-economic and political ideology based on ahimsâ. Sarvodaya, Sarva Dharma Samabhâva, Khâdi and village industries, were understood to be the practical and down-to-earth aspects of it The love commandment has also to be interpreted in terms of specific details or concrete programmes of action. There is power in this source to show the way in the present world to restore the dignity and respect for human life, to reinforce trust among warring groups, to draw up programmes to educate people on the duties towards other forms of life on the planet, and to care a little more for mother earth.

VJTR [illegible]

Mary the Contrary

A Reflection on the Annunciation and Visitation as Models of Commitment and Evangelization

Rev. Fr Thomas D'SA

The Director of the Nav Sadhana Pastoral Centre (Tarna, Sheopur P.O., Varanasi 221003) uses a kind of Midrashic reading of the figure of Mary in two sections of the Lucan infancy narrative and sees her as a "contrary woman" quite different from the Mary of traditional piety She is a model evangeliser, an inspiration for religious (to whom the meditation was initially addressed), indeed a woman whom all Christians can look up to, whatever their vocation

At the annual meeting of "Women Awake North India" (WANI) here in Nav Sadhana, I asked some participants a question: "Where do the women of our time find themselves — in the court of Eve or in the court of Mary?" "In the court of Eve" — came the instant reply. I was surprised. Here was a group of 76 dedicated women working hard at the grass-root level for the uplift of battered women and even they felt that the ideal of Mary was remote for them.

Women, in their humility have placed themselves in the court of Eve because no woman was like Mary Till they reach her, they must keep company with Eve. And so we pray in the "Hail Holy Queen" calling ourselves "poor banished children of Eve... " The figure of Mary has been so idealised that she has become unreachable for many. In her is the perfection of womanhood Therefore Pope Pius IX called her "a lily among thorns."

There has been an unhealthy contrast between Eve and Mary. We say Mary listened to the voice of the Angel, Eve listened to the voice of the devil. Mary has obedience, life and faith, while Eve disobedience, death and unbelief. Therefore Eve stands condemned, Mary exalted. Mary is honoured by God calling her 'full of grace'. In this phrase "the stress is on God's choice rather than the human acceptability."[1] Human beings also honour her: "Blessed art thou.. ." She is called "our tainted nature's solitary boast." The Litany of Our Lady goes in the same direction. The fact that many of us name ourselves Mary shows our desire and effort to be like Mary, who is the perfection of wom-

[1] I.H MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke* Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978, p. 66.

[illegible]hood. Ambrose says, "Whoever turns to God should be called Mary. For Mary is the name of the person who gives birth to Christ spiritually."

What does Mary's 'perfection of womanhood' mean? Mary is worthy of this title, as of all other titles. But some of the titles have not been properly understood. Because of her obedience, she was taken as a model of submissiveness. To whom was she obedient? When was she obedient? To every one and always?

The Mary of the Gospel of Luke is obedient and docile ... and more. She is obedient *and* disobedient. She is docile *and* not easily led. The Mary of Luke is "a contrary woman."[2] She questions the angel (1:34); she questions Jesus (2:48) — contrariness can be a constructive quality. To be contrary means to be different. Contrariness is much needed in the area of evangelisation, where at times stagnation is due to lack of creativity. A poster with a varieties of footprints at our reception room reads, "I like you, you are different." In the Magnificat, Mary interprets society in a "different" way. Traditional values are completely reversed by her.[3] She sets straight the distorted values of our world.[4] She is not a passive mother, but determined to live in her own right. She did not live in an ivory tower. "Like the calling of the prophets, the annunciation to Mary too is a calling that comes to disrupt the quiet patterns of her everyday existence."[5]

In this article I would like to add one more tribute to the traditional list of titles to Our Lady. She comes across to me as a contrary woman, ready to be different, a model our society today very much needs. In our male dominated culture, women making up their minds and holding their own opinions (= being contrary) are by and large not easily accepted as models of female behaviour. In the past the figure of Mary was used to suppress feminine thinking and acting. Men were encouraged to love and respect women if they were like Mary — obedient and docile always — the "perfect woman image." We may have formulated too many dogmas about her! J. Neuner, S.J. says that people in our time do not care much for doctrines, but for

[2] K. Coyle, "Marian Theology Today: Reinterpreting the Symbols," *EAPR* 26 (1989), pp. 134-49

[3] R.H. Maly, "Women in the Gospel of Luke," *BTB* 10 (1980), p. 102

[4] R.S. Hanson, "Mary According to Luke," *Worship* 43 (1969), p. 429.

[5] G.M. Soares-Prabhu, "Rejoice, Favoured One! Mary in the Annunciation Story of Luke," *BB* 3 (1977), p. 265.

actual guidance and orientation.[5] In this search I turn to Luke who gives us a good and clear portrait of Mary in his infancy narratives.

The infancy narratives form the latest part in the Gospel tradition. Great personalities generally have a simple upbringing. But later in life, when they rise to prominence, the biographical concern develops. The infancy narratives of Lk are written nearly 30 or 40 years after the death of Jesus. They are the fruit of the reflection of a mature Christian community. They contain theological motives that help us to understand better our Mary the Contrary.

A. Annunciation as Commission and Commitment (Lk 1:26-38)

Mary is confronted with two voices:

The voice of society: Mary was brought up in a Jewish environment She was expected to follow the customs and traditions which were the backbone of that society. Accordingly, she would be expected to marry a man and bring up a family like her contemporaries. Hence she was betrothed to Joseph. She was responding very well to this usual call of society which came naturally to her Then suddenly one day God surprised her. He broke into her life

The voice of the angel: This was the voice of God inviting Mary to think differently from the ordinary way of life that she and others were leading. It was a call to become a mother without knowing Joseph, and that too the mother of the Son of God. The future of this new type of life would entail a lot of uncertainties and insecurities, since no one had so far taken up this role. There would be great challenges to be faced. God will, however, help her in this process: "for with God nothing will be impossible" (Lk 1:37).

Mary's choice: Both these voices are echoing in her ears and so she gets "greatly disturbed." After pondering over the matter and after clarifying it with the angel she pronounces her 'fiat' to the 'voice of God' and says: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord,

[5] J. NEUNER, "A Woman Welcomed Him into Her Home" (Lk 10:38)," *VJTR* 58 (1994), p. 120.

let it be to me according to your word" (1:38). We all want to say 'yes' to God. We become different when we accept the mission given to us by God.

Let us see how Mary discerned and discovered the 'voice of God'. In the midst of this hustle-bustle of daily life, when we hear so many voices that practically tear us asunder, let us learn from her to say 'fiat' to God's voice and commit ourselves to Him.

1. *Mary opens herself to form new convictions*

As a Jewess, Mary was convinced that once she came of age she had to marry and bring up a family. In the course of the conversation with the angel she begins to form new convictions. When we open ourselves to a new conviction, we normally compare and see whether the new conviction tallies with our former experiences. No such experience is possible in the case of Mary. No woman had conceived without the instrumentality of man. "The Annunciation must have meant a physical, psychological, social and spiritual challenge to the young Mary. She faced this risk bravely and matured through the process of living this exceptional vocation."[7] Being a good Jewess, she was convinced from the lives of OT personalities that God would be faithful to God's promises. Her Magnificat is a proof of it

The two disciples on the way to Emmaus recognise Jesus and are convinced that it is He in the breaking of the bread. This is because he had earlier broken the bread with them. Similar was the experience of Mary Magdalene when she recognised Jesus after the resurrection. We do the same when we take up new tasks. We fall back on our or others' past experience in that field.

Mary is now convinced that God had given her a special mission. She is eager to bring it to fulfillment. She is ready to face the challenges that will come to her as a result of her 'fiat'. God's ways are not our ways. She will not turn a deaf ear to the voice of God, the voice of her conscience, even if the male-dominated society ostracizes her. She is not interested in the false 'love' that society offers to those who dance according to its tune. She recognises the voice of God and so she says to the

---

[7] T. BALASURIYA, "Mary, a Mature Committed Woman," *Basic Christian Community Library Service*, III, Bombay, p. 4.

angel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Here is a similar phrase as found in Ruth 3:9 and 1 Sam 25:41. Both the times it is used in a matrimonial context of the "handmaid spouse." Though betrothed to Joseph she is ready to be a handmaid spouse of God. "Behold" is also used to mean 'here I am', 'I am available'. "Let it be to me according to your word" shows the extraordinary readiness to accept God's will. She did not say 'I will try' or 'I will do my best'.[8] She was fully committed.

In this sense she is quite a radical person. She was different from others and so the popular nursery rhyme suits her well: "Mary, Mary, quite contrary." Contrariness is a constructive quality that prompts one not to accept others' thinking unless one's convinced of it.

We all like to act according to our convictions. We are ready to hear God's voice and do His will. But often we find it difficult to distinguish between God's voice and other voices. It can be just 'my voice', the Bishop's voice, the Provincial's voice, the Parish Priest's voice or the Superior's voice. In order to discern God's voice one has to reflect on God's Word, pray, and read the signs of the times. Often we know but are not ready to face the consequences resulting from acting in accordance with the divine will. For this one needs inner freedom. We are afraid of losing love, a small comfort, a chair, and thus risk our dignity integrity and even our identity.

New convictions flow from commitment. The world is in the process of rapid change In order to be meaningful in this world we may need to take up new tasks, sing new songs and see new dreams. We may have to stop being a teacher and become a social work activist. Let Mary's process of forming new convictions, a new vocation inspire us.

2. *Mary asserted her independence*

She proved that she is not dependent on the whims and fancies or the fixed expectations of the people of this world. The women of her time and age were normally under the supervision of their parents till marriage; and after marriage they came under the supervision of their husbands. But Mary was a strong woman. She wanted to bring down the mighty from their thrones and raise up the lowly. She claimed freedom from the forces of society and exhibited thus her commitment to God. She was not

[8] B. La Verdiere, "Be it done to Me," *Emmanuel* 90 (1984), p. 184.

instead of taking a step that might force Joseph to divorce her, and make her an outcast from the Jewish society which had so far sheltered her.

It is not easy to grow up as an unusual child. As human beings we all need to be to a certain extent dependent on others. No one is an island. No one is a hundred per cent independent. But if we are 'too' dependent, then people take undue advantage of us. We can become victims of their moods and temperaments and a garbage dump for their emotional refuse. This happens at times among priests and nuns, especially where priests are dependent on nuns for the kitchen, and nuns are dependent on priests for transport. Then they begin to complain that the other is taking advantage of them If we assert our independence, such embarrassing situations do not arise. Team work is commendable, but not over-dependence.

3. *Mary questioned the angel*

"How can this be, since I have no husband?" (1:34). The angel then explains how this is going to be Only after clarifying the angel's proposal, she is at peace and agrees. It is said, "Those who ask questions are fools, but for a minute; those who never ask questions, are perpetual fools." Mary is often made the model of submissiveness Her submission may not be taken to mean that she is a "yes-woman " She is not going to say yes to everyone's proposal. When the need arises, she can be firm: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2.5)

What does her question mean? In order to understand it, we need to compare the Annunciation scene of Mary to that of Zechariah They have a lot of similarities till it comes to their questions (1 18 and 1.34)

Annunciation to Zechariah			Annunciation to Mary
1 11	Angel appears	1 26	Angel is sent
12	Zechariah was troubled	29	Mary was greatly troubled
13	Do not be afraid Your prayer is heard Child bearing and naming	30 31	Do not be afraid You have found favour with God Child bearing and naming
14-17	Description of the child	32-33	Description of the child
18	Question of Zechariah	34	Question of Mary
19-20	Angel's answer	35-37	Angel's answer

The difference is evident in the next part· Zechariah is struck

dumb.[9] Mary is left in peace. This prompts us to think that there was something unsavoury in the question of Zechariah. The difference is very subtle. Zechariah: "How shall I '*know*' this?"; Mary: "*How* shall this be?[10] Zechariah is asking for a sign. It is a request for a confirmation of the promise (like Abraham in Gen 15:8). And he is given a sign. He is struck dumb.[11]

According to the understanding of the Gospels it is only a "wicked and faithless generation" that looks for a sign. As distinct from Zechariah, Mary is not asking for a sign to believe. The Word of God is sufficient for her. She immediately believes the angel. She too questions. She questions only the 'manner' of birth because she does not 'know' man. *Parthenos* (virgin) implies it.[12] *Ginoskein* (to know) is used to mean marital relations. Her difficulty sounds genuine.[13] In 1:27 Lk twice calls her 'virgin'. It is deliberate usage. The term is never again used in Lk. Mary is unique.[14] In response to her question Mary is told 'how' it is going to take place: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you...." But the angel himself gives her a sign saying that Elizabeth also has conceived a son. Mary does not check the sign, but trusts the angel and at once sets out to visit Elizabeth The angel responds to both according to their questions. According to the evangelist, Zechariah was hesitant whereas Mary believed and wanted to know what steps God would take to realize his word. The angel's explanation strengthened her commitment Mere questioning is not sufficient: faith is also required, a certain amount of trust that God can do things which appear to be impossible to human beings. When we do not look for signs but trust God instead, God strengthens our trust by giving signs.

---

[9] It may be because of the spirit in which he made the request "By his *ego gar eimi* he almost implies that the angel must have forgotten the fact (sign)." A. PLUMMER, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh. Clark, 1981, p. 16

[10] "How shall this be?" is omitted in some MSS The scribe had also an exalted figure of Mary, that he did not want to embarrass her with a seeming unbelief.

[11] I H MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke*, p 60 The dumbness Zechariah may not be taken as punishment for unbelief: "These elements are certainly present (1:20), but in fact a sign is given and it serves the deeper purpose of concealing the wonder of what was to happen until the due time"

[12] J CARMIGNAC, "The Meaning of *Parthenos* in Lk 1,27 A reply to C H Dodd," *BibTrans* 28 (1977) 327-330 The word *parthenos* has the normal meaning 'virgin'. It implies that she had never known a man in the past.

[13] *Quman*, Sura 19, also has Mary saying "How shall I have a son, when man hath never touched me?"

[14] [illegible] 92 (198[illegible] p. 186.

4. Mary was fully involved in the process of the Incarnation

In Mt's infancy narratives the angel communicates all matters concerning the birth of the child to Joseph, whereas in Lk's infancy narratives all communication of the angel is to Mary. She knows all about the birth of Jesus directly from the angel. There is a face-to-face dialogue between Mary and the angel. But to Joseph only 'decisions' are communicated and that too in dreams. In the OT God generally communicated his decisions to men. Here in the scene of the Annunciation, a 'conversation' takes place with a 'woman', even more, with a 'young' woman; and that too with 'a virgin' 'betrothed' to a man! Such communication strengthened her commitment.

Mary's involvement in the process to the incarnation is seen when the angel came to announce the good news. The words "full of grace" or "favoured one" refer to a state of grace that she enjoyed even before the Annunciation They refer to the way she lived [15] Mary was "greatly disturbed" by it and "considered in her mind" what sort of "good news" this might be. Lk thus starts the whole process of incarnation by involving Mary's 'inner feelings' He speaks of the inner realities at work even before the incarnation takes place What are these inner feelings of Mary? Joy, fear, insecurity? No one else knew this news She must have felt 'alone' in the crowd. Before this great and unusual reality takes place physically, she takes time to prepare spiritually by debating within herself She ponders over and then arrives at a decision. She gathers strength and courage to face the risk It is practically a rehearsal before the final programme If we rehearse our sufferings, the final pain becomes bearable Therefore she is well composed and natural.[16]

The real involvement begins from the inner realities, i.e., the heart, the soul, the spirit, and emotions We see and listen not just with our two eyes and ears but also with a third eye and ear, the heart Because of this involvement, it became easier for Mary to say yes to God's will When we are involved at the planning level and are taken into confidence, we too find it easier to accept the decisions of our higher authorities and are

[15] R.E Brown, "The Annunciation to Mary, the Visitation and the Magnificat (Lk 1:26-56)," *Worship* 62 (1988), p 252

[16] G.M. Soares-Prabhu, "Rejoice, Favoured One!" p 260. There is naturalness and considerable psychological sensitivity in the dialogue.

willing to implement them howsoever challenging they may be. Involvement leads to accepting responsibility. Mary is a model of involvement.

5. Mary moved from the well-known past to an uncertain future.

By bidding goodbye to her ordinary life and by choosing to follow the will of God and embrace an unusual way of life, Mary moves from a comfortable past to an unforeseen future. From her past and her present, she can only guess what her future is going to be. She does not know where she will end up. This sort of uncertainty creates tension. Such tensions are a necessary part of Christian discipleship.

The uncertainty in Mary's case is no less than that of Noah when God commanded him to build an ark on 'dry land'! It is no less than when God promised Abraham that he will make his descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and as sand on the shore of the sea, in a land flowing with milk and honey for which purpose God gave him a 'barren land' and a 'barren wife'! God's ways at times appear to be very, very odd. He expects us to step into the unknown. But once we have taken the step he guides us along the right path. To move into the unknown one must have courage to take risks and have a radical trust in God. "The Lord be with you" is the promise of God's supportive presence throughout the mission entrusted to Mary [17] Lack of courage makes many remain in the dark, behind closed doors. They do not see that life is beautiful if we look beyond. God trusts us even before we trust him. He trusted Mary so much that he entrusted his son to her. "God entrusts every child he creates to the care of a woman "[18] In response, Mary's trust in God moved mountains. Because she had trust in God, she had trust in Jesus too that he would do what is right. She left him psychologically free to grow in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. "Would that Mother Church reared her children in the same atmosphere of trust!"[19] If so, there would have been greater creativity, newness and freshness in the Church.

Mary inspires us to move from the comfortable past to an

[17]U. HOLTZMEISTER, "Dominus Tecum," *Verbum Domini* 23 (1943), pp. 232-237.

[18]J.A. LITTLE, "Redemptoris Mater; The Significance of Mary for Women," *Marian Studies* 39 (1988), p. 152

[19]H. SHEEHY, "The Bible, Morality and Women," *The Furrow* 36 (1985), p. 561.

uncertain future. Not just at the Annunciation but throughout her life we see Mary doing this. We go to unknown places as pioneers, but through our own contribution and hard work that place later becomes comfortable. At this time the memory of Mary should drive us to move again! Her commission and commitment pushes her onward. To be like Mary there should be a continued experience of uncertainty in our lives as we move towards and discover the unknown This is possible only when we have a radical trust in God and in one another.

B. Visitation as Evangelisation (Lk 1:39-56)

As a result of accepting God's word, the mission of Mary begins. She becomes an evangeliser. That is what happens when the Spirit of God "overshadows an ordinary woman of little note in an ordinary village of little note "[20] The commission was to be the Mother of the Messiah who will accomplish "the way of salvation." That was indeed good news. By revealing the identity of the Messiah, the angel gave the 'Gospel' to Mary. Thus Lk presents Mary as the first one to hear and accept the good news and to proclaim it [21] Therefore Elizabeth says, "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Lk 1 45). The handmaid of the Lord becomes a handmaid to Elizabeth [22] This visit of Mary the evangeliser gives some guidelines to the evangelisers

1. Spread the fire

Mary sets out into the hill country (v.39) She travels a distance of nearly 90 miles. The journey must have lasted several days. Why such an urgency? The good news is shared as quickly as possible. One cannot contain it within oneself. When it is shared, the joy is also multiplied Therefore Lk presents Mary '*rising*' (*anastas*). This word refers to a spring action, a quick response, getting up from sleep in order to act.[23] Even before her marriage, she goes to Elizabeth. Mary goes "with haste"

[20] C.J. ROSEMILLER, "Prophets and Disciples in Luke's Infancy Narratives," *BTod* 22 (1984), p 363

[21] R.E. BROWN, "The Annunciation. " (note 15), pp. 250, 254

[22] R.J. RAJA, *You Are Free*. Bangalore. NBCLC, 1993, p. 6

[23] A. OEPKE, "Anistemi" in *TDNT*, I, ed G KITTEL. Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1979, p. 368.

which literally means 'ran', so that she reaches Elizabeth's house in the same verse! In the same way Lk shows the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (24:13-27), but to return to Jerusalem to proclaim the good news that 'Jesus is risen', he gives only one verse! "And they rose that 'same hour' and returned to Jerusalem..." (Lk 24:33). Lk presents Mary as different from other women. She is a tough woman and not just a gentle Madonna. She receives the call to proclaim the good news in difficult circumstances. Like Jesus when he evangelised the Samaritan Woman (Jn 4) at a difficult time (noon), a difficult place (Samaria) and a difficult person (a woman, a Samaritan). But once the conviction is created in Mary, nothing can stop her proclaiming the good news

2. *Religion is a matter of the heart*

Mary entered the house of Zechariah (v. 40a). 'House' can mean also a place of fellowship.[24] It is a place of privacy. Mary enters into the heart to Elizabeth This is also clear from the effect Mary's greeting had on Elizabeth (v 41). Only two women are said to be present at this meeting because they both have something personal to share, the good news. In evangelisation, a one to one situation works better Jesus too evangelised the Samaritan woman when she was alone.

3. *The joy in receiving the good news*

Mary's greeting of proclamation of the good news was so powerful that the babe leaped for joy in Elizabeth's womb and she was filled with the Holy Spirit (vv. 41.45). Even before Elizabeth could respond to Mary's greeting, the unborn babe responded. Elizabeth was moved from the depths of her person. She was deeply touched by the good news and her feelings were passed over to the child. This is what happens to every person who receives the good news (v. 42). If we evangelise in a meaningful way, the evangelised ones are generally grateful. Many of them offer the produce of their field, refreshments, money, etc. The labourer deserves his wages.

What was the greeting of Mary? Why was it so powerful? Mary had experienced the good news and then brought it. She had the fullness of the good news. The content of the greeting is

[24] O. MICHEL, "Oikos" in *TDNT*, v, p. 130.

not given in the text. Many scholars say the Magnificat is an extension of the greeting. The oriental greeting is generally long, "a ceremonial act whose significance lay in the content of the message."[25]

4. Mary's convincing testimony

Mary gives her testimony to Elizabeth acclaiming what God has done for her (vv. 46-55). An evangeliser's testimony, like Mary's, must contain three aspects:

a. What I was (her low estate);

b. How I met God (Jesus) (what God has done for her);

c. What I have become with God's help (she is blessed).

The testimony must accompany the good news we proclaim in order to substantiate the good effect the good news has on *me, on us*!

5. Evangelisation leads to service

Mary remained with Elizabeth for three months to serve her till the birth of John the Baptist, as long as Elizabeth needed her. Mary had fellowship and sharing with Elizabeth for a reasonable amount of time, and built up her person. Lk's conclusion (v. 56) points to the fact that Mary brought her work to completion. She proclaimed the good news, but did not run away after that. She lived what she proclaimed. She remained in solidarity with Elizabeth, with a suffering woman. It is this witness aspect of the Church that makes evangelisation meaningful.[26]

Conclusion

Mary and Elizabeth provide us with an example of courage and fortitude. They are ready to be different, ready to be unique. They represent a redeemed community concelebrating in the Spirit the works of God that they have experienced in their lives. We religious who take inspiration from Mary need to rethink our life in the light of Mary's life. It is healthy for us to appreciate and celebrate our differences. Our differences add to our richness. If we want to be like the other, we may be sub-

[25] E.E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (New Century Bible). London, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1974, p. 76.

[26] R. Coste, "Notes Théologico-Pastorales pour L'Évangélisation du Temps Présent," *EspV* 97 (1987), p. 159.

merged in the collectivity and lose our identity. Without the challenging image of Mary, there is the danger that attraction to religious life may diminish. With a comfortable, domesticated image of Mary,"[27] those who have a vocation to religious life may go away and those who do not have a vocation may well stay back.

Hats off to the many women religious who following the example of Mary have gone for the ministry of evangelisation. They have proved that they are different through their choice of challenging ministries. What Pope Paul VI said in his document 'Marialis Cultus' gives a fitting conclusion to our portrait of Mary: "She is held up as an example to the faithful for the way in which in her own particular life she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God, because she heard the Word of God and acted on it, and because charity and the spirit of service were the driving force of her actions."

[27]T. BALASURIYA, "Mary, a Mature Committed Woman" (note 7), p. 13.

VJTR 58 (1994) 634-644

The Saving Charism of Authority

A. Paul DOMINIC, S.J.

This study deals with the role of authority in religious life specially in terms of the judgment involved in its exercise. The author reflects on the NT warnings against judging, which are reinforced by modern psychology, and on the saving nature of God's judgment. All exercise of judgment, if at all needed, demands faith in God to whom judgment belongs and empathy for the other. The study will form part of a book, *God of Charisms. Commitments, Concerns and Conflicts in Religious Life*, to be published by Asia Trading Corporation, Bombay. The author's address is Satyodayam, 12-5-33, S Lallaguda, Secunderabad, A P 500017

Authority is mostly associated with the right to command others in the name of God and to demand their obedience accordingly. The danger involved in such an exercise of authority is that of playing God.[1] Another danger is that authority has the exercise of judgment, too. Let us consider this matter at some length.

The relationship of authority to judgment is not as clear as that to commanding. However there is no exercise of authority without judgment coming into play. For one thing, the command issued by the authority is in one way or another the result of a judgment concerning others. Even the general government of authority including, among other things, admission, promotion, appointment and dismissal of members in a religious institute, implies a set of judgments on the individuals who belong to the group. In particular when the authority chooses to confront and correct others, it makes an act of judgment pure and simple.

Twin Dangers of Judging

The pervasive nature of judgment in the normal functioning of authority implies that one would abdicate one's authority if one were not to make any judgment at all. If judgments are a necessary element in the exercise of authority, the question rises whether they are fair or false, right or wrong, true or only apparently true. What Jesus said to those who had judged him

[1] See J.L. McKenzie, *Authority in the Church* London. Geoffrey Chapman, 1966, p. 111.

wrong on his healing work on the Sabbath, "Do not keep judging according to appearances; let your judgement be according to what is right" (Jn 7:24), applies to the experience of authority even today as a practical guideline.

The danger involved in the authority's use of judgment is the surreptitious influence of appearances on the judgments delivered without awareness of all the factors that influence the judgment. But this danger, which will be dealt with later, is relatively less serious than the other arising from the truth that judgment belongs to God alone. As James says in his forthright manner: "There is only one lawgiver and he is the only judge; and who are you to give a verdict on your neighbour?" (Jas 4.12) Any human judgment, even when it is not untrue and has necessarily to be made, must needs accept the primacy and ultimate prerogative of God's judgment. There is a tendency, even an itch, among us to sit in judgment, and we may even be persuaded that we are acting for God. Such zealous acting often turns out to be a dangerous affair, and authorities need to be ever wary of this

Usurpation of Divine Justice

It would appear that Jesus saw no end of this danger affecting religious circles and so chose to deal with it in season and out of season. When the Pharisees, for instance, took objection to his disciples' picking ears of corn while walking through the cornfields one Sabbath, their casuistry recognized a violation of the law of the Sabbath and they believed that they were upholding the law of God and so acting for God. But Jesus argued that they had misread God and misjudged the blameless, however well-intentioned they might have been (Mt 12:1-8). On another occasion speaking about the intentions of those officials who would in future ostracize his disciples by expelling them from the synagogues, Jesus said that they could even be disposing of his disciples on the belief that they were acting for the sake of God, indeed doing a holy service to God (Jn 16:2). Such acting 'for God' was nothing short of opposing God, as Gamaliel, the exceptional Pharisee, would later warn the Sanhedrin in one of their proceedings against the followers of Jesus (Acts 6:34-39).

The disciples of Jesus were not above the temptation to be judgmental, believing that they were acting for their master, as for instance when they reacted to the Samaritans' refusal to let

him pass through their village. He rebuked them in no uncertain terms, and called into question the spirit they were made of, and disabused them of their judgmental zeal (Lk 9:51-56).

The record of the Church in the matter of its verdicts has been far from unsullied. Perhaps the accusation that may be levelled against the Church by non-Christians with good reason bears upon its condemnation of dissenters like Savonarola and Galileo. A famous Jewish trickster story bears this out as perhaps nothing else. In a Spanish city a Christian child was found murdered and the suspicion went naturally against the Jewish rabbi there. But no hard proof could be found, and so the proposal was that the case would be decided by lot. The accused agreed to the proposal. The inquisitor felt that justice could not be left to mere chance and so wrote "Guilty" on two pieces of paper and offered the suspect the choice of one of the two. The Jew took one and instead of giving it to the inquisitor ate it up. When the inquisitor protested, the Jew answered that he did only what he had felt inspired to do, and anyway the piece of paper left over should indicate by its opposite whether he was guilty or not. So he came to be saved from the contrived justice of the inquisitor! Whether or not the story is true, the very fact of its circulation is a symptom of how religious authority in the Church is in danger of usurping the place of divine justice, despite the fact that the Founder of Christianity himself was a victim of the miscarriage of justice at the hands of the highest Jewish religious authority!

While no such story has come down, at least to my knowledge, in the history of religious life, anyone who has received the sad confidences of even some religious men or women would know that the victims of judgment gone awry in religious life are not rare, to say the least. Once, to quote an instance that appeared in a journal of theological reflection,[2] a Provincial reprimanded severely a young priest companion of his for a supposed gross misbehaviour in relation to a woman, after hearing a report from an eyewitness who was scandalized. All that the young man had done was bringing succour to a badly wounded woman lying helplessly on the road by holding her tight and walking her to the house for immediate medical aid! Surely the Provincial was less aware of the dangers in judging than of his duty to correct any deviation in the practice of religious values!

[2] *Vidyajyoti* 1993, p 544.

Jesus' Judgment on Judging

In the context of such experiences of the danger of judging with zeal and yet judging amiss, the refusal of Jesus to be a judge in a particular case between two brothers can be an eye-opener. When a man asked him to intervene in his dispute with his brother over their common inheritance Jesus asked him in return, "My friend, who appointed me your judge, or the arbitrator of your claims?" (Lk 12:14).[3] What could have been the reason for Jesus to deny, and not only to refuse, a judging role as requested by the aggrieved party? One reason could be that he was taking a stand against the tendency of people to sit in judgment on others too readily and even hastily. More importantly, he was declaring to the people that God alone is the judge and that God alone and no other can appoint another person to act as judge; and in this way was warning them of the ever present danger of daring to act in the place of God. Perhaps Luke was making precisely this point when he juxtaposed the saying under consideration rejecting a judging role, and another saying about the Jewish authorities who would be only too ready to pronounce judgments on his disciples (Lk 12:11-14).

There is no need of reading between the lines to grasp what the peculiarly Matthean parables of "The Darnel" and "The Dragnet" (Mt 13:24-30, 47-50) teach about judgment. Clearly enough, they emphasize the principle of judgment God alone has the right to judge any and every person, and no human person ought to judge another.

This unambiguous teaching has come down to us in the memorable pithy saying "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned" (Lk 6:37). One may find a commentary on this saying in one of the sayings of the Desert Fathers

> Judge not him who is guilty of fornication, if thou art chaste: or thou thyself wilt offend a similar law For he who said, "Thou shalt not fornicate", said also "Thou shalt not judge "[4]

[3]It is interestingly instructive that this story and the other one in Lk 9:51-56 dealt with earlier are the only two stories, both found in Luke only, in which Jesus is asked to rebuke or correct a third party, and that in both cases he chooses to confront the complainant. See *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. VIII, ed G.A Buttrick et al. Nashville· Abingdon Press, 1952, p 225.

[4]*The Desert Fathers*, trans. H. Waddel, cited in D Goergen, *The Sexual Celibate*. London. SPCK, 1974, p. 188.

If any further commentary were needed one could not think of anything better than the experience of Job. Job's friends judged him, inspired by their traditional piety, and they were judged by God. The attempt to defend God's justice in their unanimous condemnation of Job invited God's anger. The reason was that their condemnatory bias amounted to blasphemy.[5]

Refraining from judging is being compassionate as God is compassionate: can we not come to this conclusion when we observe how the two pronouncements of the Lukan Jesus, "Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate," "Do not judge, and you will not be judged" (Lk 6:36-37) occur one after the other? Anyone who has a true knowledge of God will shudder to judge others, and will dare not judge others for two reasons: one, judging is blasphemously usurping the role of God who alone can judge, and two, it is unlike God to judge, because God is compassionate Where such knowledge does not obtain there is no fear of God and so judgment is the order of the day leading even to persecution, as Jesus forewarned his disciples about their future fate (Jn 16:2-3).

In the light of this unqualified injunction not to judge or condemn, the rare picture of the trial procedure of an offender in the Church advocated by Matthean Jesus (Mt 18.15-18) in his discourse on the Church appears difficult to interpret "Its difficulty lies," as Barclay says, "in the undoubted fact that it does not ring true; it does not sound like Jesus, it sounds much more like the regulations of an ecclesiastical committee."[6] Granting this argument of Barclay, one can still ask with him what the import of the original brief saying of Jesus found in *Quelle* (from which Matthew came to elaborate his story) could have been? In other words, what could be the positive way of judging, if at all it has got to be done and needs must be done?

Hypocrisy of Human Justice

Before this question can engage us fruitfully and elicit from us a sincere and serious response, we should be free from another danger incidental to human judging activity which was mentioned earlier. It is the danger of judging according to ap-

[5] *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed., R. E Brown et al. Bangalore: TPI, 1990, n. 40:128, p 488.

[6] W. Barclay, *The Daily Study. The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 2. Edinburgh: The St. Andrew Press, 1976.

pearances, as Jesus warned us against. It is not merely the fact that appearances are deceptive. It is also the danger that arises from within those who judge, because of what they appear in their own persons to themselves. They interpret negatively what they see outside them by the apparent experience of what they seem to be positively within themselves. But given their false perception of themselves, the judgments they pronounce are coloured by their complex and confused personalities. The worst danger lurking in all human judgments is that they can be nothing but the self-projection of those who make them. It is a vagary of human conduct that judgments are often used to project the hidden, negative aspects of oneself to others. It may well be that whenever we judge others it is for no other reason than that we are judging something in ourselves of which we are unaware.

This is certainly one of the discoveries of modern psychology. Carl Jung for instance would explain the working of judgmental projection by what he calls the shadow in each one of us. The shadow is that part of our person which we have suppressed and thus hidden from ourselves because of its dark and fearful aspects, but which keeps interfering insidiously and surely in all that we do in typical destructive ways. One such way finds its expression in judging others: it is a wishful way of denying one's own evil by projecting it outside and so reinforcing one's own shadow further.

If in modern times Jung had his own psychological perception of the basic self-deception involved in human judgments, so had Laotzu more than two millenniums ago a spiritual insight:

> A good man, before he can help a bad man,
> Finds in himself the matter with the bad
> And whichever teacher
> Discounts the lesson
> Is as far off the road as the other,
> Whatever else he may know [7]

More forthright and forceful in this regard was the teaching of Jesus. Here are his words stinging with a touch of humour, that only heightens the effect of the sting:

> Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the great log in your own? And how dare you say to your

[7] *The Way of Life according to Laotzu*, trans. W. Bynner, New York: 1944, n. 27, p. 41.

brother, "Let me take that splinter out of your eye," when, look, there is a great log in your own? Hypocrite! Take the log out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take the splinter out of your brother's eye (Mt 7:3-5).

Holy Fear of Judging

Hypocrisy — that is the subtle danger for all those who dare judge or who in their officiousness think nothing of judging. This danger operates on the purely human level: even psychology could name it, without naming God in the process.

In contrast, there is the other greater danger dealt with earlier: presumption, which means in practice not to reverence God as the sole judge, and so rather too easily to assume the godly role of judging for the sake of the so-called godly rule that is paramount in customary religious life. Because of this twin danger authority is likely to miss its twin goals, viz., serving the need of people and the absolute authority of God;[8] for hypocrisy is not the way to understand what people need nor is presumption the way to sense what belongs to God.

Anyone persuaded of this will be filled with a holy fear of judging and will not even raise the question of what one must do when confronted with the necessity of judging a case. For, after all, the problem facing those in authority *most* is not a situation necessitating an urgent judgment but the danger of rushing into hypocritical and presumptuous judgments.[9]

Saving Judgement

However there are peculiar situations when judge we must by virtue of our office. What can help us in this regard is to see what Jesus did when he was caught in a situation which forced him to pronounce a judgment. Such was the situation when the scribes and Pharisees brought before him a woman allegedly caught in the act of adultery and pressed him to give his verdict on the matter, reminding him of what the Law had to say about it. Far from denying her guilt Jesus judged the case, without saying so in so many words and concluded the process in such a way that the woman was saved and freed and liberated! His

[8] See *Sacramentum Mundi*, vol. 1&2, ed., K. Rahner et al. Bangalore: TPI, 1975, p. 133.

[9] For more on this see M. S. Peck, *The Road Less Travelled*. London: 1990, pp. 161-6

judgment, not unlike his foster father's in relation to his mother in regard of her apparent infidelity, was a saving judgement: saving the woman personally and even socially, hopefully.

It was basically the same spirit that lay behind his refusal to intervene in a dispute of a man with his brother regarding their inheritance (Lk 12:14). As in the previous case, he was not for blind application of the law which was clearly as laid down in the Code (Deut 21:17), for such an impersonal judgement would be saving neither the sinner nor the sinned-against, spelling the end of personal relationship between the contending parties. He opted rather for judgments that saved for society the very offender against society so that society too would be saved by the restoration and continued preservation of mutual relationships of love, and not by law.[10]

What he did and what he stood for, he taught. His teaching of correction of another in the Church, which presented a difficulty earlier, may well be explained in this light. After all, the first step in having it out with the person who has really, not supposedly, done something wrong is to gain him or her back. The second step of taking a couple of witnesses to the offending brother or sister is not to prove him or her wrong but to ease and facilitate the required reconciliation. The third step is to settle the matter in the community viewed not as the highest court of appeal but as the fellowship of Christians bound together in healing love and prayer. The fourth step, should the third too not succeed, seems in the text to be rejection of the renegade as a gentile or tax-collector. Rejecting this last interpretation as the least likely, someone has elucidated an unsuspected meaning. What Jesus said, he suggests, could be reworded like this:

> When you have done all this only to find the offending person still unyielding you may be tempted to dismiss him as no better than an irredeemable tax-collector or an inveterate gentile. Well, you may be right! But, you know, I have not found either group hopeless. They too have a heart to be touched, if only you know how! So however stubborn your transgressor may be you may still win him just as I have done.[11]

Here is a reasoning whose persuasion is hard to resist! And it lends itself to the conclusion that judgment is not only an

[10]On this aspect of law in the Church see J. DOMINIAN, *Authority*. London: Burns & Oates, 1981, pp. 85-86.

[11]W. BARCLAY, *The Daily Study Bible*, vol.2, p. 189.

[illegible] at saving an errant member but also a concern for the gathering of believers bound together, forming them into ever greater unity and community.[12]

Incidentally, this idea is part of the meaning of the parable of "The Darnel" already referred to. "The mention of 'gathering' four times suggests that the parable is concerned somehow with the community," as it has been pointed out.[13]

Interestingly enough, Gamaliel, a member belonging to the Sanhedrin with powers of judgment, warned his colleagues against a premature judgment of the apostles for the precise reason that the longed-for ingathering of Israel apparently gaining momentum in the enterprise of the apostles might be jeopardized by their rash judgment.[14]

To conclude, would it be rash to suggest that if judgment were to be an expression of acting for God by authority it must be seen clearly to be an expression of acting for people individually as well as collectively? To put it more simply, any judgment should be an expression of faith in God no less than faith in others whom the judgment will affect· faith in God inspiring fear of God in us, and faith in others experienced as saving empathy with others for the purpose of gathering all in unity. A famous Christian who experimented with such authority found its source

Every hour
Eye to eye
With this love
Which sees all
But overlooks
In patience,
Which is justice
But does not condemn
If our glances
Mirror its own
In humility [15]

---

[12]This accords well with the idea of God's justice as aiming "at creating an egalitarian community in which all classes of people maintain their basic rights." See *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol.3, ed D N FREEDMAN et al New York: Doubleday, 1992, p 1129

[13]*The New Jerome Biblical Dictionary*, n. 42 88, p 656

[14]See *ibid*, n. 44 41, p 739

[15]D HAMMARSKJOLD, *Markings* London: Faber & Faber, 1964, p 121

Should Attempted Suicides be Penalized?

Felix PODIMATTAM, O.F.M. Cap.

Reflecting on a recent Supreme Court verdict depenalising attempted suicide the Professor of Moral Theology at the St Francis Theological College (Thellakom, Kottayam, 686016) affirms the intimate relationship between law and morality, but also their distinction, the law being operative only in the realm of public morality where the social welfare is at stake. He thinks that given the special psychological and sociological factors entering the case of suicide the verdict of the Supreme Court was reasonable, even though suicide is definitely wrong. But the dangers of abetment of suicide must be avoided and the trend to euthanasia stopped He also suggests that it is pastorally unadvisable to deny Christian burial to suicides

The recent Supreme Court verdict, quashing Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code, has served to focus attention on such issues as the relationship and difference between morality and law, morality and legal enforcement, the supposed criminality of suicide, etc. In this article I propose to address these issues.

1. Intimate Relationship between Law and Morality

The suggestion that law and morality should be delinked and unrelated is unacceptable Law and morality both deal with the living and the quality of human life. It would be dangerous to define their spheres in such a manner that they do not borrow from each other. There is need for the law to keep close to the moral sense of the community and for the moral sense of the community to inspire the law This need not amount to a repression of the minority opinion because in a civilized society the general moral sense includes the toleration of differing moral viewpoints and practices.

Law and morality support one another. Morality supports the law: if compliance to the law were to rely merely, or principally, on police control and court sanction, we would have a very odd society indeed. But, in fact, the law appeals to the

people's sense of responsibility and civilization consists in this that citizens act not from fear but from personal convictions regarding the need and meaning of the law. The law, in turn, supports morality. If civil law were not to generate basic conditions for an ordered society and provide people with opportunities for human living, moral life would be impossible. Moral responsibilities would remain undischarged and moral rights unprotected in the face of encroachments by the unscrupulous.

To be sure, there have been historical experiences in which the relationship between law and morality was based on faulty philosophical and theological principles. It would be unwarranted to conclude that the only alternative is to deny them any mutual relationship and to go about as if morality did not exist. We can hardly divorce the law from moral values. The constitutional and civil laws formulate and guarantee human freedoms and rights — the freedom of movement, expression and association, the right to life, integrity, and property, for instance. These freedoms and rights are worthy of respect precisely because of the moral values inherent in the concept of the human person. The same is true of criminal law Certain actions seen by conscientious people as sins the law declares crimes. Offenses against the person such as murder, rape, assault, kidnapping, false imprisonment, perjury, bribery, etc , no one would suggest that these could or should be legalized If a state were to legalize them, we would not tolerate it and would appeal to an unwritten law higher than positive law, to the law of human freedom and rights, which precedes all positive law, and which the positive law cannot violate

2. Difference between Law and Morality

Interdependence of law and morality does not mean that they are identical Their fields converge but are not co-extensive Crimes are sins, but sins need not necessarily be crimes. As such sin and crime are not identical Lying and premarital sex are sins, but not crimes However, if lying involves fraud, if pre-marital sex implies public indecency or exploitation of a minor or the helpless, they are both sins and crimes.

3. Morality and Legal Enforcement

The distinction between crime and sin means that the law has a limited function in regard to morality. It is not the func-

tion of the law to prohibit or penalize an immoral act simply because it is immoral. The purpose of the law is the public welfare of society. The duty of the state is to provide the physical, moral, intellectual and social conditions which make an authentic human life possible for all citizens. In the field of morality, then, the proper scope of the law is public morality. Private morality is a matter for the individual conscience. How people act becomes the business of the law only when it begins to impinge on other people. Incidentally, it should be noted that the distinction between public morality and private morality is not the same as that between publicity and secrecy. A public lie is not a crime, a secret murder is.

It is impossible to delineate with absolute precision the specific fields of public and private morality. No sharp line can be drawn between the moral actions which properly fall within the competence of the State and those which fall outside it. Here reasonable people may differ from time to time and from culture to culture. The fact that a specific question is rightly treated as a matter of public morality in one country or era is no reason for making it a matter of public morality in other places or ages. Circumstances are important here. All in all, it is healthier to limit the competence of the State rather than to extend it. Legal restraints are justified only when the common welfare demands them Sanctions must be confined to overt acts or omissions which inflict definite wrongs on specific persons or on the community at large.

The State may not legislate in the field of private morality. Private morality covers more than purely internal states of mind and heart — surely nobody claims that the law can enforce states of mind! It covers also external actions which have no direct or significant bearing on common welfare. For example, lying and gluttony do not fall under the sanction of the law. They belong to the field of individual conscience. The law must allow freedom of choice and action to the individual in his or her personal life — also the freedom to do wrong even when the person knows it is wrong.

We live in a pluralist society in which citizens give allegiance to different moral codes. Most, but not all and perhaps a decreasing number, do so in the context of a religion. Some are eclectic about their moral positions. These divisions of moral convictions do not necessarily fall along the line of the division

churches. Within the Catholic Church, for example, a number of people do not accept the position of the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* as an adequate statement of the morality of contraception. There is no point whatever in saying to the State that such people have no right to hold their moral conviction. It is not the State's business to tell people to belong to a particular Church or religion and, if they do subscribe to it, to hold the moral positions enunciated by its head or books

The law makers must reckon with the consequences of legal intervention as realistically as possible. A flat prohibition of a vice may effectively suppress it in one community; in another it may lead to greater evils, such as the corruption of the police and black markets The experience of prohibition in many countries is relevant here Often the law should regulate and control what it cannot abolish

On all this the following points seem valid. First, the State cannot legislate for everything It has means other than the law for correcting anti-social behaviour, for instance, education in civic virtue and responsibility Too much dependence on the law means disrespect for all law In judging a socially undesirable activity, one should distinguish between its *nuisance* and its *menace* factor. Even though a given practice is harmful, the law should not intervene unless it is a real threat to the community unless the law can meet the case, and unless there is no other way of neutralizing the threat Second, if a law is not enforceable it is a bad law Third, if a law leads to greater evils it is again a bad law

4. Application to Cases of Attempted Suicide

Section 309 of Indian Penal Code was a bad law for the following reasons First, the community has means other than penalization for discouraging suicides Suicide is more a consequence of social ills than a personal ill-will improvement of the socio-economic conditions and family milieu will go a long way in reducing the tendency to take away one's life Society being the villain, it is unfair to cast the entire blame on those who succumb to despair because of the conditions in which they live.

Suicide is rare in communities where the collective conscience is stronger than the individual conscience. In some vague way individuals in these communities seem to think that they belong

more to the tribe or the nation than to themselves. The same is true of those communities in which belief in an afterlife is strong: why flee the pains and difficulties of this life if one cannot thereby avoid eternal punishment? Only within highly individualized civilizations, such as the Roman in the first centuries of the Christian era and modern civilization for the last century and a half, has suicide been claimed as a right and is hardly a scandal. In an individualistic perspective, which always implies a diminution of religious faith, each one considers life as belonging to oneself; one seeks only what one believes to be one's own happiness and thinks that one has to render account only to oneself for the use one makes of one's life. Thus nothing could seem more logical than to put an end to one's life when it no longer procures the pleasure and happiness desired.[1] Education to greater religious and civic sense is a more effective antidote against suicide than legislation.

Second, the threat to the common welfare of society involved in suicide is not sufficiently great to call for legal measures. The argument that suicide necessarily does harm to other persons or to society at large is far-fetched There are many instances of suicide where death is not a noticeable loss to society; an honest person could argue that, in some instances at least, society was better off without the persons involved. This is not to deny that suicide is often injurious to other persons, especially the concerned family.

There is no sufficient reason to think that the Supreme Court judgment will necessarily lead to an increase in suicide. When people under stress think of suicide, they hardly keep the court verdict in mind. When desperate persons undertake to end their life, they enter into a zone of self-destruction where the law is the last thing in their mind The mental frame which governs such persons is above concern for the law.

In striking down Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code the Supreme Court prevents the law from interfering in the freedom to die of one's own accord. However, the court made it clear that the "right to die" does not mean a "right to be killed" by a third person, because under the law, the abetting of suicide is still punishable by imprisonment. Secondly, the right to die is again subject to other laws of the land. For example, under the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act of 1987, the so-called wid-

[1] Ignace Lepp, *The Authentic Morality*. New York: 1967, pp. 104-105.

one's right to die, either of her own will or under compulsion, on the pyre of her husband is prohibited.

A keen watch has to be kept on the abetment factor in incidents of dowry-deaths, crimes on women and self-immolation. There is need of a new law to weed out all aspects of coercion from suicide, failing which the Supreme Court judgement would run the risk of abetting sati, self-immolation, fasts unto death and even murder. Furthermore, in a poverty-ridden country like ours, the Supreme Court judgement should not be allowed to lead towards euthanasia. There is need to ensure that the judgement is not misused for criminal purposes. Special care should be taken of cases where there is suspicion that murder is being passed off as suicide The criminals in society may dangerously exploit the quashing of Section 309 and the judgement could result in a blind eye being turned to the abetment factor.

Third, the law was hardly enforceable Due to legal hassles, the fear of police and court proceedings, most incidents of attempted suicide were registered as accidents. Many other cases went underground Incidents of overdose of drugs and burns go unreported Such cases are often entered in the register of accidental deaths. Most of the people attempting suicide change their statement. If it is a case of overdose of drugs, they may insist that they consumed them by mistake. There is no way to prove the opposite Hardly anyone admits to attempting suicide. Very often the family members hide the truth and say that the bottle of poison was mistaken for the bottle of syrup. It must be made to appear that everything is fine in the family.

Fourth, Section 309 of the Penal Code led to greater evils. In the first place, according to lawyers the indignity and persecution faced by failed suicide attempters made their "second life" not worth living Although the punishment for attempting to commit suicide was only one year, litigation usually dragged even up to eight years For survivors trying to overcome the trauma and, ironically, the ridicule of society for having failed to die, court appearances were traumatic experiences. Even if they tried to forget the past, the law would not allow them to do so.

In the second place, often a suicide is nothing but a cry for help. Generally society and family do not take the trouble to find out why the person is unhappy. The person is trying to say: look I can't cope — and instead of helping we punish him or her.[1]

[1]Cf. *Hindustan Times*, April 29, 1994, p.1, *ibid.*, May 2, 1994; *Indian Express Sunday Magazine*, May 8, 1994, p 3

In the third place, Section 309 of the Penal Code made no distinction between various kinds of suicide. According to the Code, all those who attempt suicide were guilty of an identical offence and equally separated from non-suicides so that it does not really matter what kind of a suicide a person is, so long as he or she is one. This is manifestly objectionable. We have to distinguish in suicides an enormous range of disvalue in a gamut that runs from the squalid and mindless suicide of playboys or film starlets, through the pitiful suicide of the depressed, the anguished suicide of those who suffer beyond endurance, to self-sacrificial suicide.

In the fourth place, there are types of suicide which, even if objectively wrong, are not blameworthy and consequently in no way punishable. In other words, there is a kind of suicide which is subjectively excused even if objectively wrong. We can identify some such types. First, suppose one thinks one is morally bound to commit suicide because one has a terminal illness and continued medical care would financially ruin the family. Surely one is not subjectively blameworthy for what one does out of a sense of duty to one's family. Such a suicide is not culpable, even when the moral conviction in question is mistaken. Second, the suicide of a person who is temporarily of unsound mind is surely morally excused. So is, third, the suicide in an extremely depressed mood So there are types of suicide which are excused even if objectively wrong.

The main point is this. a person may commit suicide and it may be conceded that this is wrong. But it is another step to show that the person is blameworthy and must be penalized for this. Most suicides are irrational and seem to be suicides in a moment of depression and despair.[3] Depression, like any severe emotional experience, tends to primitivize one's intellectual processes limiting the range in one's survey of other possibilities. The Supreme Court has shown awareness of the sorrow and suffering of people who try to commit suicide.

Furthermore, the judgement will help in eliminating the stigma attached to attempted suicide and enable people to approach psychiatrists and talk about it openly. It will open up new frontiers in the promotion of mental health. With psychiatric treatment more easily available to those who attempt suicide, the

[3] Richard Brandt, "The Morality and Rationality of Suicide," in James Rachels, ed., *Moral Problems* New York: 1975, p. 366.

number of repeat attempts may be reduced. It would be most unfortunate if the spirit of this judgment is not translated into reality.

Mr Justice B.L. Hansaria who delivered the judgement said that Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code deserved to be effaced from the Statute book to humanize the penal laws of the country. It was a cruel and irrational provision and it resulted in punishing a person again who had suffered agony and would be undergoing ignominy because of his failure to commit suicide.

In this connection a word can be said about denying Christian burial to those who commit suicide. The general pastoral rule is that as there is usually great doubt regarding the person's full responsibility for the suicide, a Christian burial is not to be denied, especially in the light of the needs of the family. The final ethical decision concerning the act of self-destruction seems to be largely outside the forum of human beings, and exclusively part of God's forum. We should seek sensible ways to understand suicide. Only understanding, not condemnation, will make it possible for us to cope with the tragedy of suicide and to help those in need.

Veritatis Splendor: A Resurrection of the Concept of *intrinsece malum*. II

Vimal TIRIMANNA, C.Ss.R.

After the study of the history of the theology of "intrinsically evil acts," the author first shows how the "Proportionalists" have challenged the concept and reviews the teaching of the Magisterium in this matter. He shows that the literal terminology of *intrinsece malum* is not found in Vatican II nor in the encyclicals before *Veritatis Splendor*. Its centrality in the last encyclical is brought out; but also the difficulty this concept faces when taken in the narrow traditional sense of the Moral Manuals that focus on the physical acts without regard for the intention of the agent or the circumstances. The examples advanced in the encyclical itself show that the circumstances are taken into consideration in the very affirmation of the evil of such acts. This seems to imply that the exact philosophical and theological meaning of *intrinsece malum* needs to be better articulated.

3.5. The Proportionalist Challenge

The Second Vatican Council marked definitively the end of the era of the Manuals, and the concept of intrinsic evil gradually waned. In the late 1960's the emergence of the Proportionalists[48] within the Catholic tradition, seriously contested the concept of *intrinsece malum*. The challenge these Proportionalists posed to the traditional concept was so fatal that one can say that they hold a lion's share in the responsibility of almost eliminating it from post-conciliar Catholic moral theology. Without entering into a detailed discussion, we will attempt to give here a brief outline of how they contributed to the near extinction of this concept.

As in St Thomas, the distinction the Proportionalists make between pre-moral[49] and moral evil is of crucial importance to

---

[48] For a detailed discussion of the beginnings and the concepts of Proportionalism, see Bernard HOOSE, *Proportionalism: The American Debate and its European Roots* Georgetown University Press, 1987.

[49] It is to be noted here that among themselves the Proportionalists use different terminology to refer to the same reality of pre-moral or physical evil. Thus, we have Peter Knauer who uses the term *physical evil*; Joseph Fuchs uses *premoral evil*; Richard McCormick and Bruno Schuller use *nonmoral evil*; Louis Janssens uses *ontic evil* or *premoral disvalue*. All these terms refer to the same reality. See Richard M. GULA, *Reason Informed by Faith*, New York: Paulist Press, p. 268. In this essay, we will be using the term "premoral evil."

understand their stand with regard to *intrinsece malum*. In the act of killing a person, "killing" as such is a pre-moral or a physical evil. To determine whether this act of "killing" is a moral evil, one has to consider the intention of the agent and the surrounding circumstances. To illustrate the point, common sense itself tells us that there is a big moral difference in killing a person in self-defence and killing a person out of avarice. Catholic tradition itself has regarded the former as licit, and hence it is not murder while the latter is regarded as outright murder. In both these cases, the act as such is the same, namely, killing a person (*a non-moral act*). But, for the act of killing (which is a *non-moral evil*) to become an act of murder (which is a *moral evil*), one has to consider the intention and the circumstances; it is they (the intention and the circumstances) that make the moral difference. Hence, the insistence of the Proportionalists that the intention and the circumstances must be considered along with the consequence, before determining whether an act is morally evil or not.[50] As we saw at the beginning of this essay, the very definition of *intrinsece malum* excludes any consideration of intention or the circumstances. It is precisely here that the Proportionalists have convincingly touched the Achilles heel of the concept of intrinsic evil.

Let us illustrate what we have said about Proportionalists in general, by taking one of them, Joseph Fuchs. He writes:

> Morality, in the true (not transferred or analogous) sense, is expressible only by a human action, by an action which originates in the deliberate and free decision of a human person An action of this kind can be performed only with the intention of the agent. One may not say, therefore, that killing as a realization of a human evil may be morally good or morally bad; for killing as such, since it implies nothing about the intention of the agent, cannot, purely as such, constitute a human act. On the other hand, "killing because of avarice" and "killing in self-defense" do imply something regarding the intention of the agent, the former cannot be morally good, the latter may be.[51]

Fuchs goes on to consider whether there could be absolute moral norms and, eventually, *intrinsece malum*:

> The question of the applicability of moral norms may arise in still

[50] As their name itself implies, the Proportionalists also speak of *a proportionate reason* for a pre-moral act to be a moral act, but for our purposes, we do not need to enter into a discussion of this here. Cf., HOOSE, *op.cit.*, pp. 1-4.

[51] Joseph FUCHS, "The Absoluteness of Moral Terms" in C. CURRAN and R. A. MCCORMICK (eds.), *Readings in Moral Theology*, No. 1, New York: Paulist Press, 1979, p. 119.

another form known from tradition. If the absoluteness of the moral norms signifies objectivity more than universal validity, can moral norms be universal at all, in the sense of being applicable always, everywhere and without exception, so that the action encompassed by them could never be objectively justified? Traditionally, we are accustomed to speak of an "intrinsece malum."

Viewed theoretically, there seems to be no possibility of norms of this kind for human action in the inner-worldly realm. The reason is that an action cannot be judged morally at all, considered purely in itself, but only together with all the "circumstances" and the "intention." Consequently, a behavioral norm, universally valid in the full sense, would presuppose that those who arrive at it could know or foresee adequately *all the possible combinations* of the action concerned with circumstances and intentions, with (pre-moral) values and non-values (*bona* and *mala "physica"*). A priori such knowledge is not attainable. An a priori affirmation would not come to be a moral judgment by way of the premoral. Add to this that the conception opposed to this does not take into consideration the significance for an objective understanding of morality attached to, first, practical experience and induction, second, civilization and cultural differences, third, man's historicity and "creative" perceptions [52]

It is obvious, then, that for the Proportionalists the existence of intrinsically evil acts as understood by the Catholic tradition is impossible. The point they contest is the possibility of "foreseeing all the possible combinations" of intentions and circumstances with regard to human acts; hence, they say, that it is impossible to make a priori judgements whether an act is moral or immoral without considering the intention and the circumstances. They find it hard to accept that there are intrinsically evil acts, independent of intentions and circumstances. Fuchs, for example, says that *theoretically* there can be no universal norms of behaviour in the strict sense of "intrinsece malum."[53] However, he says that *practically* there can be norms properly formulated as universals to which one cannot conceive of any kind of exception; as an example, he cites the "cruel treatment of a child which is of no benefit to the child."[54] Such an act is "intrinsically evil" for Fuchs. Here Fuchs is not alone in accepting the existence of certain qualified acts of *intrinsice malum*, in which the circumstances and the intention are taken into consideration. Timothy O'Connell holds that "the direct killing of

[52] *Ibid.*, p 124.

[53] FUCHS, *ibid.*, p. 125.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

the patient," is intrinsically evil.[55] Elsewhere, McCormick too holds a similar view and says that all Proportionalists would admit that there are some intrinsically evil acts provided "the object is broadly understood as including all the morally relevant circumstances."[56]

Thus, it should be clear that while denying the existence of *intrinsece malum* (independent of the intention and the circumstances) as understood in the tradition, especially in the manuals, the Proportionalists nevertheless, agree that there can be really intrinsically evil acts, provided all the intentions and circumstances involved are considered before determining the morality of such acts. In other words, their main objection to the traditional concept is that one cannot and should not determine the morality of human acts a priori without considering the intentions and circumstances involved, because no one can foresee all the possible intentions and circumstances of human acts.

4. The Magisterium and *Intrinsece Malum*

The first Pope to use the term intrinsic evil in an Encyclical was Pius XI. In *Casti Connubii* (1930) he wrote:

> But no reason, however grave, may be put forward by which anything intrinsically against nature may become conformable to nature and morally good Since, therefore, the conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately frustrate its natural power and purpose, sin against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious (*intrinsece inhonestum*)[57]

Although the phrase which Pius XI used here was not *intrinsece malum*, but *instrinsece inhonestum*, another passage in the same Encyclical indicates that he really believed in inherently evil acts:

> Great care should be taken that regrettable external circumstances do not become the occasion for a more regrettable error No difficulties can arise which can reduce the obligation of God's commandments forbidding acts which are evil of their inner nature,[58]

In the first passage we have cited above from *Casti Connubii*, it should be clear that for Pius XI an act intrinsically against

[55]T. O'Connell, *Principles for a Catholic Morality*,, New York. Harper & Row 1990, p 195.

[56]Richard McCormick, "*Veritatis Splendor* in focus· Killing the patient," *The Tablet*, Vol. 247 (30 October 1993), p. 1411

[57]Pope Pius XI. *Casti Connubii*, *A.A S* Vol 22 (1930), p. 559.

[58]*Ibid.*, pp. 561-562

nature is intrinsically evil, and an intrinsically evil act can never become licit.

In 1951, Pius XII reaffirms his immediate predecessor on the concept of intrinsically evil acts, when he writes: "No 'indication' or necessity can change an intrinsically immoral act into a moral and licit one."[59] In 1956, while speaking on artificial insemination, the same Pope condemned the act of masturbation to obtain semen as intrinsically evil: "This is always an act contrary to nature and so is intrinsically evil."[60]

In these two statements of Pius XII Murtagh detects two strands of thought The first is that an act which is intrinsically evil remains so regardless of circumstances, and the second is that an intrinsically evil act is an act contrary to nature.[61]

In 1968, talking about contraceptive acts in his Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, Paul VI followed his predecessors in saying that an intrinsically evil act cannot be right·

> In truth, if it is sometimes licit to tolerate a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater evil or to promote a greater good, it is not licit, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil so that good may follow therefrom, that is, to make into the object of a positive act of the will something which from its nature transgresses the moral order . Consequently, it is an error to think that a conjugal act which is deliberately made infecund and is intrinsically dishonest could be made honest and right by the ensemble of a fecund conjugal life.[62]

Again, although Paul VI uses the phrase *intrinsece inhonestum*, he insists that an act that is intrinsically evil cannot become good. Also, it should be obvious from the above citations that for both Pius XII and Paul VI, those acts which are intrinsically evil, are so because they deliberately impede the natural effect of the marriage act.[63]

In 1984, Pope John Paul II, in his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, affirmed the existence of intrinsically evil acts:

> It must be added — as was likewise done at the Synod — that some sins are *intrinsically* grave and mortal by reason of their matter. That is, there exist acts which, *per se* and in themselves, independently of circumstances, are always seriously wrong by reason of their object.[64]

[59] PIUS XII, *A.A S* 43 (1951), p 843
[60] PIUS XII, *A.A S* 48 (1956), p. 472.
[61] J. MURTAGH, *Intrinsec Evil*, Rome PUG, p. 31
[62] Pope PAUL VI. *Humanae Vitae*, *A.A.S.* Vol. 60 (1968), p. 491.
[63] MURTAGH, *op.cit.*, p. 31
[64] Pope JOHN PAUL II. *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* (1984), No. 17.

In his latest Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, the Pope categorically re-affirms that there exist intrinsically evil acts independent of any intention and circumstances:

> Reason attests that there are objects of the human act which are by their nature "incapable of being ordered" to God, because they radically contradict the good of the person made in his image. These are the acts which, in the Church's moral tradition, have been termed "intrinsically evil" (*intrinsece malum*): they are such always and *per se*, in other words, on account of their very object, and quite apart from the ulterior intentions of the one acting and the circumstances. Consequently, without in the least denying the influence on the morality exercised by the circumstances and especially by intentions, the Church teaches that "there exist acts which *per se* and in themselves, independently of circumstances, are always seriously wrong by reason of their object"[65]

In the history of the Church, Pope John Paul II becomes the only Pope to use the expression *intrinsece malum* explicitly and more than once in official magisterial documents of this sort. Among all the major official magisterial documents, *Veritatis Splendor* is unique in leaving no doubt as to the existence of intrinsically evil acts. It is also the only document of this kind that treats this concept at such length. Under the subtitle, "*Intrinsic evil" · it is not licit to do evil that good may come out of it*, the recent Encyclical has devoted five full articles to this concept of *intrinsece malum*. This and the categorical assertion the Pope makes in no. 115 on *intrinsece malum*, among other things, makes one easily agree with Germain Grisez who holds that *the central theme* of the Encyclical[66] is "the *reaffirmation of the universality and immutability of the moral commandments*, particularly by those which prohibit always and without exception *intrinsically evil acts*."[67]

However, in spite of its clear exhaustive elaboration of the concept of intrinsically evil acts, *Veritatis Splendor* also leaves room open for many questions with regard to the concept. In the section on intrinsically evil acts, the Pope uses altogether six footnotes or sources to substantiate his arguments Unfortunately, at least three of them pose big question marks as to their relevance. In footnote no. 133, the Pope invokes Paul VI's Encyclical

---

[65]Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* (1993), No 80 quoting *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 17

[66]Germain GRISEZ, "Veritatis Splendor in focus 1, Revelation versus dissent," *The Tablet*, 16 (October 1993), p. 1329 (unpublished).

[67]Pope JOHN PAUL II *Veritatis Splendor*, No. 115

Humanae Vitae (1968), to support his point that contraception is one of those acts *intrinsece malum*, about which he is talking in *Veritatis Splendor*. But one notices that the term Paul VI used in his Encyclical was *intrinsece inhonestum*, not *intrinsece malum*. Then, after citing his own Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, in footnote no. 131, the Pope goes on to cite an Address of Paul VI to the Redemptorists in 1967, in which he used the phrase *intrinsece malum*. But, this was a year before *Humanae Vitae* where Paul VI *deliberately avoided* using the same phrase in his important Encyclical. Hebblethwaite illustrates the point:

> ..*Veritatis Splendor* indeed quotes a speech in which Paul VI says, "God forbid that people should think that things are now licit that were once declared 'intrinsically evil'" (*mala*), and asks: "Who does not see that this leads to moral relativism?"

But this address was to the Redemptorists, in 1967, the year before *Humanae Vitae*, and cannot refer to it. Indeed, the use of the phrase here makes the avoidance of it in the encyclical all the more striking [68]

According to Nicholas Lash, this citation from Paul VI "is perhaps the most embarrassing sentence in the encyclical."[69] He goes on to explain his point thus.

> This sentence is embarrassing because Pope Paul VI did not say that contraception was intrinsically evil (*malum*) but intrinsically "*inhonestum*" And the one thing clear about the meaning of this word is that it was chosen in order to *avoid* saying "*malum*"[70]

As we said at the beginning of this essay, we do not find the Second Vatican Council using the concept of *intrinsece malum* in any of its documents. Thus, it is all the more surprising to see how the recent Encyclical deftly tries to make a link between this concept and *Gaudium et Spes* In no 80, after elaborating what intrinsically evil acts are, the document makes a surprising appeal to *Gaudium et Spes* to support its point:

> The Second Vatican Council itself, in discussing the respect due to the human person, gives a number of examples of such acts "Whatever is hostile to life itself, such as any kind of homicide, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and voluntary suicide; whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, physical and

[68] Peter HEBBLETHWAITE, "Pastors in a china shop," *The Tablet*, Vol. 247 (11 (September 1993), p. 1160.

[69] Nicholas LASH, "*Veritatis Splendor* in focus. 5, Teaching in crisis," *The Tablet*, Vol. 247 (13 (November, 1993), p. 1481

[70] LASH, *ibid*

mental torture and attempts to coerce the spirit; whatever is offensive to human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution and trafficking in women and children; degrading conditions of work which treat labourers as mere instruments of profit, and not as free responsible persons: all these and the like are a disgrace, and so long as they infect human civilization they contaminate those who inflict them more than those who suffer injustice, and they are a negation of the honour due to the Creator."[71]

All the acts enumerated above are certainly deplorable acts, but the Vatican Council *did not* call any of them *intrinsece malum*, and therefore, when these acts are cited as examples of intrinsically evil acts, it appears as an effort to attribute to the Council what it never said.[72] In fact, such an effort seems to be stretching the concept of intrinsically evil acts too far, for few of these acts enumerated from *Gaudium et Spes* seem to fit into what the Pope describes as *intrinsece malum*

> Few of these practices, however, can easily be made to fit the Pope's description, worked out with such care and defended with such vigour, of intrinsically evil acts Thus, for example, the assertion that "any kind of homicide" is intrinsically evil would be either false or tautologous Tautologous, if "any kind of homicide" means any kind of killing that is not permitted, false, if homicide simply means killing human beings "When it is a matter of the moral norms prohibiting intrinsic evil, there are no privileges or exceptions for anyone" (96) Yet Catholic tradition has been flexible enough for popes and bishops to have tolerated — sometimes through silence, sometimes through connivance — most of the slaughter of two world wars and the killing fields of Vietnam [73]

The above citation draws our attention to two important points regarding the examples of intrinsic evil enumerated in the Encyclical: *the moral terms used* (in describing those examples), and *the immutability* of the intrinsically evil acts. As we saw earlier in this essay, "murder" is a moral term, different from a physical term like "killing" As such, it is difficult to think of any Catholic theologian, the Proportionalists included, who would deny the immorality of "murder" (an immoral act, as different from a physical act of "killing") The very word "murder" implies that intentions and circumstances have been

[71] Pope JOHN PAUL II. *Veritatis Splendor*, No 80, quoting *GS* 27

[72] However, one should also say that the examples of intrinsically evil acts enumerated by the Pope show a clear departure from earlier tendencies of magisterial documents to limit such inherently evil acts to sexual ethics, this, undoubtedly is a positive point that needs to be stressed.

[73] LASH, *loc.cit.*, p. 1480.

taken into account, and it is in that sense that it differs from the physical act of "killing." Lisa Cahill illustates the point when she writes:

> ... the encyclical itself obfuscates the concept of intrinsically evil acts by giving examples on disparate levels, which are for the most part not under dispute by the so-called "proportionalists" it opposes (6, 80). Murder, adultery, stealing, genocide, torture, prostitution, slavery, "subhuman living conditions," "arbitrary imprisonment" and "degrading conditions of work" have few if any defenders among Catholic theologians. The point of course is that these terms and phrases do not, as the encyclical implies, define acts in the abstract, but acts (like intercourse or homicide) *together with the conditions or circumstances* in which they become immoral. Such acts are indeed wrong, because immoral circumstances have already been specified in the examples given. A single term like "murder" or "genocide" make it clear that what might have been a justifiable "act in itself" (homicide) was done in wrong circumstances, or a phrase like "killing an innocent person," which spells out exactly what circumstances of homicide are meant, results in an absolute moral norm About this there is little disagreement.[74]

The examples of intrinsically evil acts as given in *Veritatis Splendor* also draw our attention to the issue of the immutability of such acts That is to say, by definition, no *intrinsece malum* act can change its supposedly inherently evil nature according to the changing epochs of history. These acts are by definition supposed to be evil *always and everywhere*. The Encyclical itself vigorously defends their "universal and permanent validity."[75] If so, the examples enumerated in the recent Encyclical pose many problems, for during various periods of the Church's history itself, their supposedly inherently evil nature has changed in the eyes of the Church. For example, slavery and torture have been tolerated by the Church for centuries (and sometimes, even defended), and it was only at the Second Vatican Council that they were explicitly and definitively condemned as a disgrace to human dignity.

5. Conclusion

Throughout the Catholic tradition, at least from the time of Augustine, the idea of *intrinsece malum* was present, at least implicitly. Although Thomas Aquinas repeated Augustine, asserting that there exist intrinsically evil acts, he seemed to have

[74]Lisa Sowle CAHILL, "*Veritatis Splendor* in focus: 9, Accent on the masculine," *The Tablet*, Vol. 247 (11 December 1993), p. 1619.

[75]V [illegible]

also insisted on the importance of considering intentions and circumstances in determining the morality of human acts. In the process, he seemed to have laid down a basis for the rejection of intrinsically evil acts, though he himself never rejected them. The period of the moral manuals saw the flourishing of the concept of *intrinsece malum*. During the post-concilliar period, however, Proportionalism, which grew up within the Roman Catholic tradition, dealt a fatal blow to this traditional concept of inherently evil acts. The most elaborate magisterial statements on the existence of intrinsically evil acts come from Pope John Paul II, and of these, the recent Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* is the most prominent. His apparently forceful and uncompromising insistence on the existence of *intrinsece malum* seems to have resurrected this concept in the field of moral theology.

However, as Cahill says, "Moral evil will not be recognised as such simply because an 'intrinsic evil' flag is waved over it; substantive and reasonable arguments must be advanced about the specific nature of the acts in question."[76]

In the last analysis, one may ask the question: are there intrinsically evil acts at all? As we saw, the Proportionalists themselves, while opposing the traditional way of understanding this concept (independent of all intentions and circumstances), admit that there are certain acts which cannot be justified under any set of intentions or circumstances Two well-known examples they cite are the cruel torture of an innocent child and the direct killing of the innocent But, a careful examination would show that even these two examples are well qualified by circumstances. The act of torture is qualified with the circumstances of "cruel," "an innocent child," and the act of killing is qualified by the circumstance of "direct " In other words, in both these examples, the circumstances are more or less taken into account. Therefore, they do not fall within the boundaries of the traditional description of *intrinsece malum* acts, which by definition are independent of any intentions or circumstances. As such, it is difficult to maintain that there are intrinsically evil acts *in the sense* the Catholic tradition understood them (i.e., independent of all intentions and circumstances). The reason for such an assertion is given by Murtagh himself:

> The reason is that before a moral judgement of a human action can be made all the relevant elements of the act must be considered If we exclude circumstances and motivation we are no longer speaking of a human act and, in the case of evil, we are no longer speaking of evil in the moral sense[77] ❑

---

[76] CAHILL, *op.cit*, p 1619

[77] MURTAGH, *op.cit*, p. 70

VJTR 58 (1994) 663-672

Raymond Panikkar's Theology of Religions: A Critique

Fr Anto KAROKARAN, cmi

Thirty years ago, in 1964, R. Panikkar published his doctoral thesis in theology, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, that made him known throughout the theological world Nearly 25 years ago, in 1970, a no less seminal book came out, *The Trinity and World Religions*. On this occasion missiologist-theologian Fr Karokaran (Saccidananda Ashram, PB 25, Nassingpur 487001) gives a general outline of some areas of the master's thought (Theology of Religions, Dialogue, Trinity, Christology and Church) and offers a critique specially in respect to its depreciation of history

Raymond Panikkar's outstanding contribution to the Indian Church comes in the field of the theology of religions and dialogue with other religious traditions, especially Hinduism. In consideration of his valuable works in this realm, he can be called the theologian par excellence of dialogue in our times. He has authored about thirty books and several hundred serious articles His works fall under mainly three interrelated fields: history of religions, theology of religions and hermeneutics.[1]

Context and Forces Shaping Panikkar's Theology

Panikkar addresses himself to a new situation in human history: the encounter of cultures, religions, races and nations in close range. In this situation of global village and global consciousness, "theologies or simply religious reflections can no longer function in isolation from one another and they have to learn from a reciprocally fecundating *dialogical dialogue*. Not a single human problem today can be properly put — let alone solved — if not in a cross-cultural context."[2] Panikkar also believes that the Christian theology which has become sterile and stunted through centuries will be rendered creative and capable of responding to modern challenges through cross-fertilization and mutual fecundation in the process of dialogue. He also con-

[1] E.H. COUSINS., "Introduction: Panikkar Symposium at Santa Barbara," *Cross Currents*, XXXIX (1979), p 132.

[2] R. PANIKKAR, "Hindu Ecclesial Consciousness," *Jeevadhara*, 39 (1974), p. 199.

[illegible] that the problem of a double identity faced by many Asian Christians can be solved in the same process.

Characteristics

His theology speaks a mutational and inter-civilizational language corresponding to the kairos of the new world situation mentioned above. He signals a paradigm change in theology and, therefore, has to be understood and judged within it. His theology is ecumenical in the widest sense of the word and derives its vitality from the lived experiences of the authentic adherents of different religions rather than from their philosophical and dogmatic systems and structures. It has the thrust of a theology based on intuition and mystical vision of reality, thus differing from the Western systematic, rational theology. The basic intuition and central thought permeating his entire theology and practice of religion is: pluralism is grounded in the nature of man and reality.[3] According to him reality is to be understood more as relational than as subsisting in itself.

A Summary Presentation of Panikkar's Thought

This will be done under following heads. theology of religions, Dialogue, Trinity, Christology and Church.

Theology of Religions

R. Panikkar holds that no religion can alone contain the plenitude of Truth and claim a monopoly over it. What is needed is to recognize the radical relativity and interdependence of different religions. He uses a two-pronged approach to establish his point and bring the world religions to the table of dialogue for mutual fecundation. The argument is partly negative and partly positive. In the first instance, God as the absolute cannot be expressed in the finite; every recipient receives according to its mode. So there is little scope of grounding a Christian superiority/uniqueness in the rock of the historical revelation it possesses; for in so far as it is received, this revelation has to undergo the inherent limitations of a receiver who is finite. In the second instance, Panikkar establishes the functional equality of

[3] R. PANIKKAR, "The Myth of Pluralism, The Tower of Babel — A Meditation on Non-Violence," *Cross Currents*, 39 (1979), pp 203, 226, 231

all religions in that all can lead their respective adherents to salvation.[4] In this connection, he makes a distinction between Faith and Belief[5] and three levels of religions.[6] We describe here only the former.

Faith is distinct from belief. Faith is a primal anthropological act; its very function is to open us to transcendence, "salvation," or "liberation." This is a fundamental constitutive element of the human person. Belief, on the other hand is the concretisation of this primordial human act in a particular, emotional, intellectual and cultural way. Faith is more than belief and, therefore, one should not identify one with the other. Such an identification will corrupt belief and lead it into exclusivism. Many religions have committed this mistake. Dialogue can serve as a corrective to this tendency. While the bond between faith and belief is intimate, faith as a personal act is common and is at work in all authentic religions; it finds a functional equivalence to all religions and at the same time opens the possibility of communion among them.

Dialogue

Panikkar can accept neither the exclusive inclusivism of Christianity nor the inclusive exclusivism of Hinduism; he is equally against parallelism and relativism.[7] He seems to have taken this standpoint because of his idea that pluralism is grounded in the nature of the human and that reality is relational. Because of this perception, he moves towards an experience of wholeness behind the plurality. Dialogue is the means for the ultimate goal. Dialogue is neither debate nor comparative religion, but is primarily a religious task: meeting God in my neighbour. Through it one enters into the spiritual experience of one's dialogue partner, not merely into the doctrinal and intellectual aspects alone. In this process one has to be faithful to one's tradition. Panikkar is against 'epoche' in dialogue. He insists on the need of an intrareligious dialogue along with the inter-religious one. In the intrareligious dialogue one speaks to oneself, questioning one's

[4]R. PANIKKAR, *Religionen und die Religion*. München Max Hueber, 1965 — the whole theme of the book.

[5]R. PANIKKAR, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*. New York. Paulist Press, 1978, pp. 17-23

[6]A. KOOTHOTTIL, "Man and Religion. A Dialogue with Panikkar." *Jeevadhara* XI (1981), p. 16

[7]PANIKKAR, *Intrareligious Dialogue*, pp. xiv-xviii.

own beliefs, attitudes and practices. This will, in turn, help one to be more open to the partner in dialogue making it truly dialogical.

Dialogue is not for converting the partner to one's religion. In a genuine dialogue, there will be a mutual growth as partners enter into each other and move to the mystery beyond beliefs and religions, rituals and traditions. But this movement is not for a "uniform unity or a deduction of all the pluralistic variety of man into one single religion, system, ideology or tradition."[8] What Panikkar aims at in this process is the cross-fertilization and mutual fecundation of all cultures and religions in the present historical situation of close encounter. In his book *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics*, Panikkar proposes an interreligious hermeneutics to help dialogue partners decipher and interpret each other's religious symbols in their respective backgrounds and allow the symbols to be liberated and come alive and convey to them the experience of the 'tempiternal', 'the unthought' without intermediaries.

This is also the stage of the 'dialogical dialogue' granting humankind the capacity to "stand under" the same horizon of intelligibility This is where the act of "crossing over the way" or "interpenetration" of religion can take place as the following words of Panikkar seem to signify. "I 'left' as a Christian; found myself a Hindu and 'returned' a Buddhist without ever having ever ceased to be a Christian "[9] These words also show in nutshell the raison d'être, direction, method, content and development of Panikkar's theology with its irrepressible movement towards dialogue aimed at an experience of wholeness.

Trinity

While more or less accepting the traditional theology of the Trinity, Panikkar enlarges it so as to integrate into it the spiritual insights of Buddhism and Hinduism

The Father is the absolute, transcendent. He generates the Son eternally and in that begetting gives Himself fully. The Father then has no being, the Son is his being. He can be known only in the Son. The Father is an eternal silence.

Panikkar asks here the question: "Is it not here, truly speaking, in this essential apophatism (emptying of Being) of the 'Per-

[8] *Ibid.*, p. xxvii

[9] R. Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1975, p 42.

son" of the Father, in this kenosis of Being and its source, that the Buddhist experience of nirvana and sunyata (emptiness) should be situated?"[10] Panikkar calls/this the spirituality of the Father, thereby integrating the Buddhist insight of Reality into the Christian experience.

The Son is the 'is' of the Father, the one who acts, creates. Through him everything was made. In this respect, the Son is the mediator between the created and the Uncreated, the finite and the Absolute. Correctly speaking, it is only with the Son that human beings can have personal relationships. The God of theism, thus, is the Son.

Panikkar appreciates the decisive contribution of Christianity in the discovery of the God-person, but observes that 'Personalism' has to be complemented by the spirituality of the Father (the transcendent, non-being aspect of God) and by the spirituality of the Spirit (the immanent, non-dualistic aspect of being). Otherwise it may degenerate into some form of idolatry or iconolatry.

The Spirit is the divine immanence of both the Father and the Son Panikkar arrives at this idea by elaborating the traditional language of *circumincessio*, the dynamic inner circularity of the Trinity. The Spirit as divine immanence means for Panikkar also "the ultimate innerness of every being, the Final Foundation, the Ground of Being, as well as, of beings." According to him, the Spirit in the Trinity can be insightfully elucidated by advaita. Hindu thought can contribute to a theology and spirituality of the Spirit who realizes divinisation in us: we should try to understand in an existential and dynamic way the role of the Spirit as divine immanence and the Ground of Being and beings. Further, Panikkar develops the trinitarian notion of God especially the relational aspect into a vision of cosmo-theandric integration of Being where the integral relation and intimate communication of God, the human and the world are explained.[11] Again, from the Trinity he develops a new spirituality for the present *kairos* under the concept of theandrism where God and man are brought into "a close constitutive collaboration for the building up of reality, the unfolding of history and the continuation of creation."

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.
[11] R. PANIKKAR, "Ecology." *Monchanin*, VIII (1975), p. 27.

Christology

The point of departure for Panikkar's Christology lies in his attributing the universal saviourhood of Christ to his cosmic action and presence in all religions and beings rather than to his action and presence in Jesus of Nazareth. Christ's universal saviourhood is to be derived primarily from his position "as the Second Person in the Trinity," as the only ontological — temporal and eternal — link between God and world. Every being is made in and through him and thus exists and participates in the Son. In this ontic aspect, he is the only one who creates, saves and glorifies.

The mistake of the Church lies, according to Panikkar, in practically identifying Christ and his universal function with a particular individual, Jesus of Nazareth, and a particular historico-cultural entity.[12] In Panikkar's Christology, Jesus of Nazareth in whom Christ was present is only one instance or name among many related to his ontic salvific presence from the beginning of creation. The Buddhist tathagata or the Hindu avatara may be also related to Christ's role as a saviour. For Panikkar, then, the function/role of Christ (personhood) as a saviour is more important than his spatio-temporal individuality.[13] His Christ is to be more identified with the saving function of the Second Person of the Trinity than with a particular name like Jesus Christ, the like of which may have been many, wherever there is authentic religiousness. Therefore, his understanding of Christ is no stumbling block to dialogue but its real inspirer and force.

Church

All the aspects of Panikkar's theology, as explained above, have a direct bearing on the understanding and function of the Church and Christianity. In the entire scheme of his thought, as far as its inner logic and consistency is concerned, Christianity and the Church cannot have, as religion, a superior role, an absolute claim of truth, universality, etc., by virtue of a historical revelation.[14] The Church does not have a monopoly of salvation or of means of salvation and so cannot exclude other reli-

[12] PANIKKAR, *Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, pp. 53, 55

[13] R. PANIKKAR, *Salvation in Christ*, Santa Barbara, 1972, pp 32, 51, 77; cf. also *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, p. 36

[14] PANIKKAR, *Salvation in Christ*, p 9

gions from the divine economy of salvation for the whole humankind. Although Panikkar seems to recognize always a sui generis uniqueness in the Christian revelation, he redefines the missionary nature of the Church thus: her role is to enter deep into other religions in a true spirit of the incarnation, dissolving herself like salt in water. This may result in a metanoia in them, in the sense of an inward process, and not in terms of their being converted or of extending the present historico-social reality that the Church today is. Panikkar wants religions to take themselves into each other's heart in dialogue, being helped to realize the continuity and mutuality among them and then to go beyond, always keeping their identity, to the true Catholic religion, which Panikkar as a Christian likes to name Christianity, but others are free to call by some other name.

A Brief Critique

Raymond Panikkar represents a paradigm change in the Christian approach to other religious traditions. He can only be best judged and appreciated within this changed perspective. Our evaluation of him from the generally held Christian point of view may not perhaps do full justice to his vision. In contrast to the totally negative attitude of the early Christian missionaries in India to other religions and the partial appreciation accorded to them by the later day ones, the Church in our country has today entered a stage where not only their validity and specificity have been recognized, but also the necessity and fruitfulness of a dialogue with them for a meaningful existence and the continuation of her mission have been by and large accepted. Panikkar's contributions to bring about this sea change are unique and incomparable.

From a traditional Christian point of view, the problems raised by Panikkar's theology can be essentially reduced to the following question: Is his theology of religions consistent with that generally accepted position where a centrality and a normative character has been given to God's historical revelation in Jesus Christ? His treatment of history creates the impression that the quality 'historical' as applied to religion and revelation is more a liability than an asset. The 'ontic Christ' underpins his whole Christology; indeed, he has very little to say about the 'known' Jesus of history. His understanding of history is more related to the phenomenological, cultural and sociological as-

[illegible] than to a theological perception of the historicalness of the human being.

The parameters of a Christian view of historicalness constituting the specificity of the human being as distinct from angels or animals necessarily include human perfectibility — in terms of time and space, freedom and creativity involving the possibility and actuality of sin — to be worked out in an existential, dialogical interrelatedness and intersubjectivity with God, fellow beings and the entire cosmos. In a theological sense, historicalness is the very heart of the specificity of the human existence. It alone gives us the title to be called into an existence distinct from that of an angel and animal and invests us with the necessary ability to go beyond ourselves, rendering us qualified and poised to enter into an interrelatedness with the rest of reality. Historicalness is our way and sadhana to grow into the plenitude of Being and the only locus proper to seek and realize our identity as God's image. Far from being a liability, then, historicalness of being is our most decisive single asset. It is at the very heart of the historicalness of human existence that the Christian faith locates the Self-disclosure of God in Jesus Christ which catches up with the inner dynamics of the human perfectibility (self-transcendence) from within

The other expressions of God's decisive self-disclosure that correspond in the fullest way to human historicalness are the Kenosis and the Paschal mystery. They all mean a specific, and therefore a unique aspect of God's self-disclosure, not present in his other communications — a self-communication through an identification and solidarity with those very concrete experiences which constitute the specificity of human life: historical existence. So thorough is this identification that the medium itself (the weak flesh: humanity) becomes the most authentic expression of the message (revelation/divinity) challenging us and equipping us to realize the divine potential in us within our historical conditions. Here we experience God's self-communication as God's liberation from sin in Jesus Christ in the centre of history. The Christian faith, therefore, emphasises the experience of liberation in the concrete historicalness of the human and not outside of it, e.g., in some mystical experience or primordial act of religiousness separated and abstracted from the concrete existence. This is the reason why the Christian mystics like Teresa of Avila and Francis Assisi always referred their

experience back to the divine kenosis in history as the norm of Truth and authenticity. The expression, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," express the Christian experience of both the transcendence and immanence of God in terms of human historicalness. It does not cut off a vital link with the 'ontic Christ'. Rather, as expressed in the words "we have seen his glory ... full of Grace and Truth," the experience only recasts and reformulates the former idea and experience of God's absolute Truth in the light of the decisive encounter with God in history. The normative character of a revelation in history is understood by Christians in this sense only, and certainly not in a philosophical and rational sense of absoluteness, as Panikkar's ontic Christ and the Second Person of the Trinity seem to indicate.

Whether the content of revelation in history and its normative character are authentically and faithfully borne out by today's prevalent institutional form of Christianity can be debated. But, also, whether and how far this normative experience of an encounter with God in history can be communicated apart from the prevalent historico-social structure of the Church is no less radically questionable. But to say that the historical revelation in Jesus Christ has no specific normative and universal character is not acceptable from the generally held Christian position today.

Likewise, Panikkar's attempt to build up a Christology primarily on an abstract notion of 'ontic Christ' or 'the Second Person of Trinity' without any decisive link with the Jesus Christ of history will not be welcome. After all, Panikkar's Second Person of the Trinity is equivalent to his philosophical concept of 'ontic Christ'. How do we know the authenticity of this ontic Christ if he is intrinsically independent of Jesus of Nazareth, the latter being just one of the many actual or possible names of the former? Panikkar's ontic Christ seems to enjoy a validity of its own on the basis of the philosophical worth of the concept. But its salvific and universal significance is left wide open for debate. Now, the Logos, the Second Person of the Trinity as presented by John in the first chapter of his Gospel, is altogether different from 'ontic Christ'. This Logos has a continuity with and is decisively identified in the Word made flesh in whom we not only behold an authentic and normative expression of God's goodness and Truth (Jn 1:14), but also can have an experience of

the power to become God's children (Jn 1:12). This Truth and Power were completely different from what the first man speculated about and aspired to, in his bid to become like God, defining good and evil (Gen 3:5). A Christology that does not have Jesus of Nazareth as its point of departure will entail a lot of lacunae in authenticity, as one finds in the case of Panikkar. We can hope that he will bring in some fresh insights to clarify this issue. His idea of the necessity of a radical incarnation of Christianity into other religions may be a pointer to an acceptable solution

Remembering William Carey

William Carey, the Man and his Mission. By P.P. PHILIPS. Madras C.L.S., 1993. Pp 146 Rs 35

In 1993 some Christians celebrated the bi-centenary of the arrival in India of William Carey, linguist, bible translator, educator and international man. This small book commemorates that anniversary

Moving from a lower class Christian family in an English village to become a linguist and educator in India makes Carey a natural subject for the biographer or historian But is is a measure of what one can get away with in the country that C L.S has published a work by a sincere amateur who knows nothing of the historian's craft

Thus, instead of a competent if modest biography or history, we have a do-it-yourself hagiography, whose narrative meanders across 28 chapters The book has no form except that imposed by chronology; the trivial and the meaningful sit side by side; and the whole has little sense of real history We hear little, for instance, of the British exploitation of Bengal, against which Carey's life rises in high relief

Philips might have focussed his generally good material on the epic themes of Carey's life, slashing the chapters to, say, five, with sectional headings, viz. (1) Carey's 'emergence' from life as a village artisan at a time of great social mobility in England, (2) his huge achievement as a translator, and thus a contributor to the development of Indian languages, especially Bengali; (3) the venture at Serampore, (4) the contrast between Carey and the Christians, on the one hand, and the exploitative East India Company, on the other, and the relations between them, and (5) Carey's vision for Serampore (and India) as "closed to no caste, no colour, no country" — as much needed today as in the eighteenth century -

In this way C.L.S might meet some elementary professional standards, and appeal to a wider public at the same time For Carey belongs to Bengal, as to the rest of India; to Christian and non-Christian; to Catholic and non-Catholic, and even, crossing cultural boundaries, to the wider world We get too little sense of this universalism from Philips's book.

David BAKER

St. Stephen's College
Delhi

VJTR 58 (1994) 673-676

Listen to the Spirit

"Unless you become like children..." (Mt 18:3)

Childrens' Day — 14th November

This is a happy day Children know how to enjoy life. They are the centre of attention Parents are proud of their offspring, schools are bursting with activities. India loves her children.

Not all children are happy We think of the millions who are denied their childhood Their hands develop faster then their minds, and as soon as their little fingers are nimble the children are put to work Long hours they spend, not in schools but in factories or workshops

In our minds we also see the children who live in slums and gutters, where hunger and illness break their bodies before they have grown, and where they are abused before they have tasted the joy of living

We also remember today the first ever "Conference" of street children in the Hall of the Tata Institute, Bombay, in February 14- 17 this year, with representatives of eleven Indian cities. They presented their demands of night-shelters, non-formal education, protection against anti-social elements and against harassment through the police, which should be better prepared to deal with the children rejected by society in an understanding manner. It was a pathetic Conference: 180 children, boys and girls, representing thousands of their companions, protesting against injustice, demanding their rights. We stand in shame before them, today, on Children's Day. Must children "fight" for their rights, "protest" against injustice in the style of trade unions? We would like to tell them You are our joy, God's most precious gift to our nation. True, it is not easy to find food and shelter for all and to give you the knowledge and skills you need for your life. But we shall do our best. You will have to face a hard life, but first we want you to live as children who need not fight for their rights.

"Live as children " What does it really mean to be a child? A child is, first, totally dependent. It must be fed and carried, needs care and protection The dependence of a human child lasts much longer than that of animals who rapidly begin to live and move on their own. The dependence of the child extends over years: Not only the child's body needs help, but much more the mind, which develops only in the family, in community. In stages, the horizon widens from cradle to home, to school, to village, to human society. What is the meaning of the prolonged dependence?

In grown-up life dependence is humiliating. Men and women must stand on their own feet. A healthy self-image includes a self-reliance which is recognized also by others. For the child dependence is not humiliating; it is its very nature. The child enjoys its dependence on the arms of the mother in utter trust. It gradually must grow, painfully try to make its first steps, to have its own meals, to think and plan for itself. God wants us to grow, to fill the earth and take control of creation. But the first meaning of childhood must never be lost. Through its utter dependence and in its total trust the deepest mystery of human existence is enshrined in the child's heart in God we live and move. With our growing knowledge and command of nature, the self-assurance we need in social relations, in our planning and working, we never cease to be God's children But as we grow in freedom and strength, we are in danger of being uprooted many lose God, at times in arrogant autonomy, often puzzled by bewildering questions, most frequently drowned in the shallow trivialities of a consumer life. But without God they are homeless It is of little use to argue with them. But on the Children's Day we pray for our youth that in the years of growing they may not lose the precious childhood of living in God's love.

We pray also for ourselves the ancient psalm of adult childhood. Beyond all work and worry, after our many questions and discussions, we can be at rest in the divine mystery

> My heart is not proud, O Lord,
> my eyes are not haughty,
> I do not concern myself with great matters
> or things too wonderful for me
> But I have stilled and quieted my soul
> like a weaned child with its mother,
> like a weaned child is my soul within me (Ps 131)

The Bible describes the fulfillment of human life not in terms of efficient management with computerized control over personnel and resources but as being at home as God's children in the heavenly Jerusalem

> Rejoice over Jerusalem and be glad for her
> all who love her
> you may suck and be satisfied
> with her consoling breasts,
> that you may drink deeply with delight
> from the abundance of her glory
> As a mother comforts her child
> so I will comfort you (Is 66·11-13)

A growing child must learn Children are eager to know· people, places, a thousand things all of which have their own names Children have an absorbing memory and ask more questions than anyone can answer. So it must be, God wants us to learn He himself "brought all

beasts of the field and the birds of the air to man to see what he would name them" (Gen 2:19).

But learning is also dangerous. Along with God's creation children come to know the often twisted views of people and get confused. Together with the mind, the life of children is also shaped, filled with desires, misguided by prejudices, poisoned with destructive ideas. What they learn as children often lasts through a lifetime. It is difficult to change the outlook of adult people, to open their minds to new visions.

This was the problem for Jesus. The Jews, the people of the Covenant, should have understood him when he preached the coming of God's reign, but most of them interpreted his message in terms of the expectations they had developed through the centuries. The teachers among them could think of God's reign only in terms of laws and traditions which must be restored in their integrity — the lifegiving power of God's love was beyond their scholarly minds. They lacked the simple openness of a child's heart. Jesus thanks the Father for the few he found. "I praise you, Father ... you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children" (Mt 11:25). He expresses it even more forcefully when the scholar Nicodemus comes to him to discuss the religious renewal of the people. don't try to teach people before your own eyes are opened — "No one can see God's Kingdom unless he is born again, from above" (Jn 3:3). To understand Jesus' message we need the lucid simplicity of "God's children," born not of earthly origin but "born of God" (Jn 1:13).

Most of the people, however, thought of God's reign in terms of power, victory, greatness. This was the main block in the mind of his own disciples in understanding his own mission, his suffering and death, and a constant obstacle to their unity. When he found them arguing who was the greatest among them, "he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and said. unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3).

In the gospels we see how in Jesus' time religious education, instead of preparing the people for his message, resulted to a great extent in blocking their minds against the good and liberating news of God's love. On Children's Day we ask ourselves about the results of religious education today. We have before us the happy faces of many boys and girls who in family and school have found God's love and care. Prayer is natural to them and their faith has deep roots. But we observe other things also: experienced people who work for the spiritual growth of youth tell us that often it is more difficult to speak about God to Christian children than to Hindus. For many young Catholics everything connected with religion is stamped with boredom: we had enough of it as children. In what did their religious instruction consist? In learning prayers by heart and in memorising answers to questions which they never asked? Was their early religious practice centred on routine prayers and Sunday obligation in-

[illegible] of the conscious response to God's loving presence in their life. The faith of the child grows in the family which is the cell of the Church. Church means sacrament, the tangible and experienced medium of God's creative and life-giving presence. In the atmosphere of the family, the child's faith must blossom. Religious practices and instructions are not additions to its life but its natural expression unfolding in the sunshine of love

Love is the core of creation God shares his life and includes his children in his eternal love Love is the pervading theme of Jesus' preaching The child is close to this mystery of Being All it has and receives day by day is given freely in love It naturally has to learn that our adult society is based on economic structures with claims and dues. If I want something I must pay the bill. Adult relations are commercial But our relation to God is based on love only — the child knows it better than the adult

So was the covenant of Yahweh with Israel They are chosen as his own people not on any merit of their own, but in love "Come everyone who thirsts to the waters, he who has no money, come, buy and eat, wine and milk without money, without price" (Is 55 1f) Yahweh does not impose conditions but invites to a communion of love "Incline your ear, come to me, hear that your soul may live I will make with you an everlasting covenant" (Is 55 3)

In Jesus' time the understanding of the covenant had gradually shifted from a relationship of love to a legal agreement The Pharisees gave to God their prayers, the days of fasting, the legal observance of rituals This was the basis of their righteousness How could they understand Jesus' message of God's unconditional love offered equally to saints and sinners? Once more Jesus needs a child to illustrate the core of his message of God's reign You can never merit it "Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (Mk 10:15) Receive God's gift in love, respond to it in trust, this is the spiritual atmosphere in which the child grows, in which all Christian life must unfold

All words of Jesus about children are addressed to adults "Unless you change and become like children . " The child in us must grow but childhood should never die Our world has become over-adult, our Church over-institutional As we are God's children, the Church ought to be our home. We need the sense of belonging far beyond the loyalty to the hierarchy and orthodoxy of our Creed In the Church we should feel shelter, freedom and responsibility, blended together and proclaimed anew in Vatican II All are called to help in creating this atmosphere in the many spheres of Christian life, beginning in our families and religious communities The spirit of childhood is Jesus' precious gift to his disciples he makes us share in his own sonship and sends the Spirit into our hearts crying "Abba, Father" (Gal 4:4-6).

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Forum

The Role of Ashram Experience in the Formation of Religious and Clergy

I feel as brash about writing on this topic as your American tourist who attempts to write a travelogue on Europe because he has toured four European capital cities in five days. I did spend 38 days at an Indian Christian Ashram It has neither the flavour of a Hindu or Buddhist Ashram, nor the rigour of some other — I am told — Christian Ashrams However, it did give sufficient first-hand experience of Ashram life, fulfilling as it did the essentials of an Indian Ashram, which made my other readings on Ashrams come alive in a way mere reading without experience could not achieve

From the start I had decided to give myself wholly to the experience, to absorb it so to say through my pores. Reflection and criticism, if any, would come afterwards. For thirty-eight days, I went through the rhythms of Ashram life, and its rigours — early rising (5 a.m.), yoga exercises, meditation in a squatting or other yogic position, Mass according to the experimental Liturgy, with Sanskrit slokas and Brahminic rituals (adapted for the most part), days of fast and of total silence, strictly vegetarian diet and self-help (cleaning the room and corridors, washing of clothes and dishes, etc), and the set times for community prayers again with beautifully haunting Sanskrit prayers expressive of Christian themes The first ten days were devoted to a practical course in Indian Christian spirituality — a curious attempt to blend Christian spiritual concepts with Indian asceticism seasoned with yogic exercises. The next twenty-eight days I spent in Retreat in which I integrated what I had learnt of Indian spirituality with the main themes of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises That I lost ten kilos during that time was a small price I had to pay[1]

Something unexpected happened Like the ecstatic experience of the sunrise over the Ganges, as darkness is dispelled in a gradual spread of light and colours rapidly changing the morning sky, I began to realise that I was caught up in a stream of consciousness coming down the centuries from our nameless, faceless but authentic mystics and rishis who have spent their lives as pilgrims of the Absolute, in a relentless search for "God " I began to realise that my own search was part of a long tradition. These rishis and mystics had gone along the same road, and had reached exalted goals of self-realisation and God-realisation through rigorous discipline, asceticism and prayerfulness. They had also left records of their questing in manuals of instructions and edification for those who might want to traverse these roads less

unveiled.

In their experience I could recognise my own Christian understanding of the world, nature, the human and God. In this I grew in the conviction that what is authentically human is authentically Christian — not with any feelings of superiority, but because with C.H. Dodd I share the conviction that "to be human is to be Christ."[1]

How would an Ashram experience help in the formation of the Clergy and Religious? In the first place we would have to acknowledge the special role Indian Christian Ashrams play in the life of the Church in India. Ashrams have come under considerable flak in the last few months, so much so that their very future seems to be in question.[2]

The rishis and gurus of India are not to be looked upon as isolated phenomena on the religious scene. Rather they are thrown up by a religious tradition which reflects the culture of the Indian (Hindu) society. The rishis encapsulate in the pinnacle of their exalted quest for the Absolute, for the Real, the hidden yearning of this society which accords respectability to this their questing In another context, Thomas Merton has shown how the monk is one who has experienced in an intensive way the dread (existential *angst*) which all human beings experience in one form or another. This is what makes monasticism relevant to society In a slightly different and more homely context, we can consult the experience of an alcoholic who knows what it means to touch psychological bottom ("I was a discarded person fit for the garbage bin" was how one A A. member pathetically described himself), if we are to understand what we quite casually call the ravages of sin — in other persons, of course, not me!

The rishi, or guru, or monk is not an ideal for every one His life cannot be duplicated by the vast majority Rather he is a model or type of what every human being is striving for unknowingly — to be (as the monk struggles to be) the authentic person God wants him or her to be. And so the monk and monasticism exist because they are relevant to society

It is in this context, I submit, that the Indian Christian Ashram has a relevance for Christians in India and for the religious and priests in particular. The aim, avowed, of the Indian Christian Ashram is to discover Christ or God through Christ in an Indian way, i.e., in accordance with the aspirations and yearning of the historical Indian society in its diversity yet profound unity For we must not forget that Indian society and Indian culture are not merely to be viewed as that which is constituted by the majority community The majority community of Hindus has itself been influenced by minority group cultures — Ary-

[1] C.H. Dodd, *The Meaning of Paul for Today*, ch vi

[2] See G. Gispert-Sauch, S.J review of a book edited by Vandana Mataji, *Christian Ashrams: A Movement with a Future?*, *VJTR* 58(1994), p 262, where he draws attention to the unease about the future expressed by the very title of the book.

ans, Dravidians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Christians etc.

It should not surprise anyone, therefore, that the Ashram experience, whatever be the Ashram one goes to, becomes a deeply Hindu experience for the Hindu, and an equally deeply Buddhist or Christian experience for the Buddhist or Christian. For the rishi or sage and the mystic, the experience of soul-enlightment which they seek so ardently (and arduously) has no sectarian significance whatsoever. It should therefore not surprise us that even devout Hindu gurus encourage the seekers to hold firm to their own religious beliefs and to deepen them. By the same token, they are opposed to any attempt to promote any idea of conversion from one faith to another.

In what way can such an Ashram experience help the Catholic Christian religious or priest? I can only modestly share what it meant to me. (1) I realised that after 34 years of being a priest and at the age of almost 59 years, what I had been calling spirituality, spiritual life and spiritual exercises could not stand comparison with the example of authentic search which has been so consistent down the centuries in India. Monasticism and the eremitical life in the Christian Church had not come anywhere near making the same impression on me. (2) Long hours of prayer, long periods of absolute physical and psychological stillness didn't seem as unattainable as the projected mystic experiences of our own saints were made out to be It suddenly seemed all so accessible to the common person, the ordinary mortal like myself if I was just willing to try. (3) The singing of slokas, the rhythmic repetitions of bhajans and mantras, became as natural as my breathing, and as permanent during the day or on awaking in such a simple way — something which *hesychast* prayer seemed to make so forbidding and difficult if not impossible for my frail and weak human nature. (4) The attempts, through repeated practice, to realise oneness with the universe and oneness with all being in the Absolute Being of God made me feel closer to my fellow human beings *in compassion* than ever before The mystical body of Christ, the cosmic Christ, was not an abstruse coinage of the esoteric book or theological journal, but an accessible, recognisable reality. (5) Consequently, the movement towards liberation of the oppressed has become not the petulant outburst of some "maverick liberation theologian" (no slur intended, but only great respect for their prophetic insight and witness) but a heartfelt reality as I breathe in their pain and feel impelled to breathe out (and live) my concern and care and active involvement in their suffering and struggle wherever I am placed. (6) I realised several unexplored pastoral possibilities in the parochial ministry (which I have since carried out, though in an extremely limited way but with consoling compliances on that part of the congregation). The use of bhajans, namjapas, body stillness, etc , introduced in public acts of worship, e.g., at Mass with a city congregation, at Holy Hours with the ordinary parishioner but more fruitfully with religious communities, or in days

of recollection, have shown that the Ashram experience is not for the elite but for the ordinary Christian — which incidentally is Thomas Merton's thesis in his last book, before he died, on Contemplative Prayer. (7) Finally, my insight into the words of Holy Scripture, the liturgical texts and our sacred songs and hymns has become acute and different. No longer am I tempted to trot out someone else's opinions, theories, interpretations. The Scriptures resonate with my experience in ways beyond my wildest expectation or imagining as possible for the likes of me with my jejune spirituality, my moral weaknesses and my insufficient learning (I have no formal, professional theological training or degrees) My readings were slipshod and haphazard and extremely inadequate to meet the challenges posed by the pastoral ministry and inter-religious dialogue.

Something has happened as you have been able to gauge Of course, I can only humbly submit that what I have said bears witness more, perhaps, to the *sincerity* than to the *truth* of my conviction. Others better equipped than I can certainly pass judgement on the latter, and open fresh avenues to the truth.

(Courtesy ASIAN QUEST) FR DENIS PEREIRA

Another Ashram

The Papal Seminary of Kandy-Pune. A Hundred Years of History (1893-1993) By Carlos Mercês De Melo, S J Pune Papal Seminary, 1993 Pp viii-211 Rs 40

Earlier this year the Papal Seminary concluded the centenary celebrations of its foundation in Kandy (Sri Lanka) on the 4th of May 1893, with eight students. Pune's impressive campus of today has nearly a hundred-fold increase in the student body This foremost ecclesiastical institution has found a devoted and competent scholar to record its life, a person who has lived through almost one third of its history as a staff member The book is preceded by an informative prologue on Seminaries in the Church and in India About equal space is given to the Kandy and the Pune periods of the Seminary, although the time in Pune fills slightly more than one third of this history The great personalities at the origin of the enterprise are presented in outline Leo XIII who conceived the idea thanks probably to the donation of £ 30,000 by an anonymous English Catholic "for the establishment of a house of formation for priests from India," Mgr L Zaleski, the Papal Delegate in India for a quarter of a century who saw to the execution of Leo's dream and controlled its beginnings, and the Society of Jesus, specifically at the beginning the Bengal Mission, to whom was entrusted the direction of the Seminary, the first rector being former Superior Fr S Grosjean

The hundreds of alumni of the Seminary, bishops, priests, religious, sisters and the occasional lay person, will be happy to read this detailed account of the history of their Alma Mater and wish an ever more fruitful second century They will recall names, places and particular celebrations which marked their own growth into ministerial spirituality Floreat!

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Book Reviews

Spirituality

Nizam Ad-Din Awliya. Morals for the Heart. Conversations of Shaykh Nizam ad-din Awliya recorded by Amir Hasan Sijzi. Translated and annotated by Bruce B Lawrence. New York: Paulist Press, 1992. Pp. x-404. $ 18.95. ISBN 0-8091-3080-X

Religion is at a low ebb. Not only is it being misused and abused by fundamentalists but even its genuine practitioners often dilute its content so that it seems often to serve neither God nor humanity

The present book comes as a joyful relief The Delhi-based mystic Shaykh Nizam ad-din Awliya (1242-1325 A.D.) was a Sufi who transformed institutional Sufism, which initially aimed at individual spiritual salvation, into a movement for mass spiritual cult As a result of his efforts the general public showed a deep inclination to religion and prayers, all kinds of sinful acts disappeared, wine, gambling and other forbidden things were not spoken of, shopkeepers gave up false weights and deceit

Shaykh Awliya achieved all this not only through his personal integrity and sanctity but also and especially through his extremely effective method of teaching. He taught mainly through stories and examples. His aim was twofold The worship of God alone was never enough He was clear about this "In the eyes of God no spiritual exercise, no penance, no vigil, no prayer or pilgrimage, had greater significance than removing the misery of fellow human beings."

Fortunately, in Amir Hasan Sijzi he had his Boswell. The latter recorded most of the Shaykh's sayings from 1308-1320 These are presented in *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad*. This work was personally seen and approved by the Shaykh. In this excellent translation by the distinguished Islamicist Bruce Lawrence, we have a beautiful example of a great man's teaching in an elegant accessible presentation

One could fill a book with quotations Let us be satisfied with a few. Conversation turned to pilgrims who, on their return from Arabia, speak of nothing but the pilgrimage .. Such a pilgrim was told, "Alas, Sir, of what good has this been? Clearly no benefit has come from it," i.e , you are still the egotist you were before He went on to comment about service to others and seeking their satisfaction· "Everyone who serves is also served Someone who does not serve, how can he be served by others?"

Words are not enough; one must act, he insisted. To show this he quoted the following: "Someone once wrote a poem on ten traditions, five of which related to the head, five to the rest of the body He concluded the poem with a beautiful couplet·

Ten points in just two lines you've packed
But these are words, while you should act."

The following story not only teaches honesty, but shows the breadth of mind and what one may call ecclesiastical humility of the Shaykh: "In those days, some (Muslim) traders had gone from Lahore to Gujarat Gujarat was then ruled by Hindus When they enquired from the traders about the price of their goods ..., the traders doubled the price of each item Afterwards when finalizing the sales, they lowered their prices, selling their goods for roughly half the figures they had originally quoted The Hindus of Gujarat were not used to such practices. When they sold goods they fixed a fair price and stuck to that

prices. Having discovered that the traders came from Lahore and that all the traders in that city conducted business in that manner, one of the Hindus told them: 'It cannot be that a city which engages in such practices will thrive for long.' And it happened that as the Lahore traders were making their way home they were informed that the Mongols had invaded their city and reduced it to rubble."

A rather unusual story illustrates the connection between service and prayer. A dervish from Gujarat happened to be staying with a mad dervish. Early in the morning he (the sane dervish) went to a reservoir. Normally no one was admitted But since he was known to the custodians they allowed him to perform his ablutions. Then some women came to draw water They were forbidden, until one of them came to the (sane) dervish and asked him to fill her pitcher for her He did, and when others asked him, he filled the pitchers of five women When he returned the mad dervish was still asleep When the time for prayer came the sane dervish gave the call to prayer in a loud voice The mad dervish awoke with a start "What sort of racket is this?" he said "True work is to fetch and fill and return the waterpitchers of women And praise be to God the Lord of the Universe "

Finally on worldliness the Shaykh said "There are three types of people One type consists of those who love worldliness, are constantly engaged by it and in quest of its rewards They are numerous. A second type are those who, while they detest worldliness, constantly censure it and are preoccupied with resisting its allure The third type are those who neither detest nor befriend worldliness. They neither discuss loving nor loathing worldliness. This type is better than the other two "

The long introduction gives an interesting account of the life and life-style of the Shaykh. Completely disinterested in power or fame or wealth he scorned courting the great and even refused to entertain the Sultan.

His place in Sufism and indeed, through the present book, in world scholarship and spirituality is assured. It is a pleasure to meet such a wonderful man through this delightful book.

R.H. LESSER

By Way of the Heart. Toward a Holistic Christian Spirituality By Wilkie Au, S J Bombay St Paul's Pp 219. Rs 70 ISBN 81-7109-165-2

The author of this book was educated in the East He developed a deep interest in and love of Japanese culture He is aware of and concerned about poverty in the Philippines and he is involved in China where, in fact, are his roots He is also a Jesuit, steeped in the Bible, a man of prayer and a psychologist, having been spiritual adviser and counsellor to students and novices Surely we can learn much from such a man

The first point he makes is an important clarification Authentic psychology and authentic religion can both help us in our progress to God Sadly, as Vitz and Neuhaus point out, in many cases psychology instead of being, as it should be, an ancillary to religion has become a substitute for it This is true even in India as Indian priests learn from American psychologists

I wonder if the author is over-generalizing when he says that love of God — and others — presupposes a modicum of self-love The argument is not new The Franciscans and the Dominicans used to have it out in the Middle Ages The very fact that Franciscans could argue their case with such conviction shows surely that love of God and others need not *always* presuppose self-love

When he says that intimacy with the Lord in prayer requires the ability to be intimate in some prior human relationship, he is more circumspect. The 'ability' to be intimate, does not necessarily mean having been intimate with

How does he spell out how [illegible]

Quoting Vatican II (LG ch.5) he shows how lay people and religious have equal access to and the possibility of attaining the highest heights of spirituality. Also both share many of the same struggles and problems. There is a growing thirst among lay people today for a deeper spirituality. How can one adapt traditional spiritual aids to help them? Holistic spirituality, involving the total development of the whole person, would seem to be the answer. The holistic approach to the spiritual life suggested in this book will, the author claims, enable both religious and lay people to forge a more vital link between their faith and their daily lives.

But what precisely is the holistic approach? The author shows how holism works in medicine, education and psychology. In a similar way, holistic catechesis aims at making a person's faith become living, conscious, active and all-pervasive. Holistic spirituality must respect the psychosomatic unity of the person. It must be an ongoing total process, involving the whole person and valuing and using personal experience. Accordingly, the pursuit of holiness is in no way inimical to or even alien from healthy human growth. On the contrary, both are intimately connected. Also true spirituality cannot isolate itself from society, whether near or far.

Au quotes Irenaeus "The glory of God is man fully alive." Grace neither substitutes for nor harms; but builds on nature. He stresses the change in ministerial emphasis, from giving what one knows to sharing what one is. We can do this by caring, loving, serving, and also very much by listening. This requires a different approach to one's personal development to what one had previously.

My vocation, then, is to help God complete the world as *He* wants me to do it with my own strengths and limitations and under the circumstances in which I find myself. The vocation of each can be discerned only by honest heart-searching in the presence of God.

In his most important chapter [illegible] uses the Zachaeus story to build his idea of holistic prayer. We must present ourselves as we are, with our whole lives, climb trees if necessary — but be present to the Lord.

But where is the God to whom we have to present ourselves? To slightly misquote Elizabeth Barret Browning:

> Earth's crammed with heaven
> And every common bush afire with God
> But only he who takes off his shoes, sees ...
> The rest sit around and pluck blackberries.

If God is always everywhere, we must not only see and experience Him; we too must be transparent to God. Au then goes on to discuss these notions with relation to the commitments in Religious Life. Responsible obedience is listening and surrender. Chastity is complete self-gift to God, not suppression. I must confess though, that in this matter I find him too dependent on psychology with insufficient emphasis on the spirituality of chastity. Poverty is freedom to be embedded in God.

This book is well worth reading and not just by religious.

R.H. LESSER

More Abundantly. By Carlos G. Valles, S.J. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1993. Pp. 200. Rs 45.

One of the ways to prevent disease is to improve one's general state of health, be it bodily, spiritual or religious. And all our efforts to improve this general state of health will bear fruit only when we raise the level of the life God has given us by sharing it with all people. That was Jesus' mission, "the more abundant life" of John 10:10. Our mission today calls for increased faith, increased joy and a vibrant living in a multi-religious context like India. This is the content of the twenty essays of the book *More Abundantly*.

We, Christians, ask ourselves in the midst of a secularised world: what does it mean to be a Christian today? The question is deep and so the author tries to find an answer. He begins by analysing the contemporary situation where language is secularized, faith falters and indifference sets in.
The author, then, looks back at the past to unravel the present situation and the role and mission of the Christian In the process he discovers the difficulties and anxieties in following Christ in a multi-religious society, the consolation and the crisis created by Vatican II and its aftermath, the basic condition for leading a truly Christian life, and the meaning-giving factors in his own (the author's) life. These are the avenues of thought and action the book explores

The author uses parables, examples, anecdotes, experiences and insights to drive home his message He wanders freely through the whole world — the mystical and the secular, the ancient and the modern All his reflections are rooted in faith and have a scriptural background Innumerable anecdotes and examples are drawn from Christian, Buddhist, Islamic, Zen and Hindu traditions All aim at answering the question raised at the beginning Our internal attachments are the most difficult to unmask and get rid of. That is why we are increasingly stiff and lifeless But we are called to a greater life of joy, commitment and love, to be living expressions of the continued incarnation of God and his living action in our days.

Our world is anaemic The book explores the root causes of our sickly Christian life and hints at certain remedies. According to the author, a greater vitality in our life is the best service we, Christians, can render to the secularized world of today It could act as "a blood transfusion to an anaemic world."

Half the essays in the book are semi-autobiographical which makes for excellent reading, and the rest are reflections on the search for an increased faith.

Like his earlier books, *Living Together, I am Collecting Rainbows* and *Courage to be Myself*, the structure and the style of this book is simple and clear The first half is more lively because of the anecdotes, examples and experiences. Some dryness gets into the second half by the overuse of theological reflection. However, anyone who is concerned about the Christian community especially in India will find the book useful

P.J. JOSEPH, S.J.

Come Close to the Lord. Bible Services for Major Occasions of the Year By Fr R H Lesser Second impression Bombay St Pauls, 1994 (1991) Pp 128 Rs 22 ISBN 81-7109-137-7

The book contains 30 services for various liturgical seasons and special occasions (End of the Year, New Year, Christian Unity, Republic Day, Peace Day, Workers' Day, World Communication Day, Opening and Closing a Scholastic Year, Independence Day, Teachers' Day, Diwali, Children's Day, Vocation Day, Sacramental Preparations, Religious Commitment ..). Besides the readings, appropriate hymns from *With Joyful Lips* and *Praise the Lord* are suggested Useful for those who have no time to prepare their own services An original invocation in a new, short Litany of Our Lady, pp 97-8, is 'Help of Bishops', Pray for us!

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Liberation and Reconciliation. A Black Theology By J Deotis Roberts. Maryknoll Orbis Books, rev. ed., 1994 Pp xix-119 $ 16 95 (pbk). ISBN 0-88344-951-X

Released in 1971 and revised in 1994 this book offers an insight into the vast number of people who do not enjoy justice, equality and free-

dom, and whose only birthright is total discrimination — the Blacks. The book is an introduction to soul theology — the term 'soul' sums up the black experience, whether religious or secular, better than any other word.

In the new edition 1994, the author shows that the underclass has increased vastly and homelessness has multiplied and an alarming number of youth addicted to drugs are lead to sporadic violence Today's multicultural society includes the non-white ethnic groups in different part of the globe, who yearn for multidimensional liberation. Black theology belongs to the entire humanity, all those who challenge global violence, like the Dalits in India, Minjung in Korea, women everywhere There is need today for a theology of ministry coming out of the black Church tradition to promote a better theology of liberation through repentance, forgiveness and the sense of the cross Some of the important areas studied are the theme of "peoplehood" in quest of freedom and justice, violence as a road to justice as against the gospel as a message of "love only" (the author's view is that liberation and reconciliation are not oppositional but dialectical), the role of womanist and feminist thinkers in working out a theological system that would be theologically credible and culturally relevant, the black messiah or the third world's image of Jesus, the theme of hope in the struggle for liberation, the urgent need of reconciliation in the context of racial tensions and the reversal of the socio-economic progress. Robert's is a powerful book giving radical insights into human freedom, justice, dignity and challenging all Christians whether in the pulpit or in the pew or in the field

P.A. JOSEPH, ofm Cap.
Shanti Sadan
Tambesra 327602

William Ernest Hocking's Theory of the Reconception of Christianity. By Catherine Berry Stidsen. Bangalore: NBCLC, 1993. Pp. viii-293.

In 1992 Catherine Stidsen presented to the readers of our Journal two articles on the theology and the missiology of Hocking (1873-1966) or his "Reconception of Christianity" (pp. 215-223 and 347-355) Her thesis published by the NBCLC gives a fuller account of the thought of Hocking and also reveals more clearly, I think, both its strengths and its weaknesses.

After an initial biographical chapter, Hocking's philosophy of religion, his understanding of the essence and mission of Christianity and his call for a dewesternisation of Christianity through a reconception are studied in separate chapters The fifth chapter gives a critical appraisal of Hocking's position on mysticism, his proposed "essence of Christianity" and his reconception theory The thought of the master is explained with conviction and even devotion Some weak spots are pointed out but more on the question of strategies than the core theological position.

The initial affirmation and intention is unexceptionable Christianity must grow from contact with other religions From this Hocking derives the need for dialogue and for a human community, a "consociation among religious persons" where "reverence for reverence" is practiced Replacement of one religion for another cannot be the ultimate aim, nor a syncreticism where each religion loses its identity and original inspiration but a growth of each religion.

Formed in the idealist and liberal tradition of the late nineteenth century, Hocking seeks to work for a world-faith (nor a world religion) where religion-in-general will be lived in various religions-in-particular. For this purpose he thinks that the existing religions need to engage in a constant process of reconceiving themselves while maintain-

ing what is essential. This is a task for the mystics, says Hocking. Stidsen differs, at least in so far as the word mystic is so vague. It is rather a task for ascetics, or, as far as Christians are concerned, for "those who in this era are willing to renounce the present preoccupation of the Christian Church with itself" or to lose institutional religious security to find a new life for the tradition (216).

Hocking thought in his time that Christianity was most suited to undertake such a task successfully, another point which the author questions But the problem is to find out what is the essence of Christianity that will continue in its reconception. The liberal that is in Hocking will say that it is not dogma but compassion and the mysticism of Jesus, the divine suffering love for the world, and the idea of justice Dogmas have values only in so far as they result in transformed lives Stidsen concurs. Hence the very resurrection of Christ does not belong to the essence of Christianity, and his divinity can only be the spiritual and mystical union of Jesus' will with the will of the Father

As often happens in this kind of writing, the positions that do not accept the liberal line are dismissed as fundamentalist and incapable of renouncing self-centred views But the Christianity presented here ceases to be, I submit, event, good news, joyful announcement of God's decisive act Having no resurrection, it has no eschatology It is something quite different from the astonishing affirmations of the apostolic kerygma

The aims of the theology of Hockings are surely praiseworthy My belief is that the same aims may be pursued from theological positions that reflect more diaphanously what has been the core experience of the Church in her life and liturgy from Pentecost to our days.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

A Call to Community. The Caste System and Christian Responsibility. By Michael AMALADOSS, S.J. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1994. Pp. xv-159. Rs 50 (pbk)

The book is an valuable contribution to Dalit Theology. Making use of much anthropological research the author has examined the problem of caste both theologically and pastorally. Moreover it is clear that the author does not speak only from theory· he brings together his own experience and solid research His language is simple and lucid

The study is divided into seven chapters. The first three deal primarily with the facts and an analysis of the caste system In these chapters he comes to the heart of the matter showing how caste is a multi-faceted problem, with stress on the purity/pollution factor in the extremes and social status in the middle of the pyramid Both factors make for hierarchy and exclusion.

In the next chapter Amaladoss analyses briefly the contributions of Shri Narayana Guru, Periyar E V. Ramaswamy, Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar to the question of caste He judges that they were primarily concerned with the eradication of untouchability rather than the caste system In the last three chapters the author examines from a Christian perspective the elements in the formation of a community in the face of caste diversification

Amaladoss admits that the problem is complex and deep-rooted and that no easy solution is possible. The study of the four social reformers brings out how deeply the roots of caste system have penetrated into every stratum of society Amaladoss suggests that the conscientization of everyone is a necessary prelude to achieving the goal of a casteless society He also opens our eyes to the various possibilities where our life and worship need to be modified and integrated He calls on pastors

and leaders of the people to heed the cry of the Dalits and work for a new community in the Church and the country at large.

K. AUGUSTINE

Circles of Hope. By Bill CANE. Indore: Sat Prakashan Sanchar Kendra, 1992. Pp. 151. ISBN 81-85428-35-2.

When I started this book I thought it would be just another product of those prophets of doom against whom the great Pope John XXIII warned us, or at best a slightly dotty charismatic effusion or a New Age gasp. In fact I find a lot of sense here. A black man gives a Westerner a lesson about the roundness of the earth — "The world is not flat. You can't push your garbage and rubbish and the people you don't want over the edge and hope they'll disappear. They won't. The world is not flat; it is round. And sooner or later what you push over will come back and bat you in the ass."

This is almost literally true. Because of humanity's selfish greed the hole in the ozone layer widens and more people get cancer in developed countries than elsewhere. When Americans found that DDT pesticide was dangerous they exported it in large quantities to Third World countries. So it comes back to them in coffee beans from Peru and bananas from Ecuador. The most dangerous 'rubbish', of course, is nuclear waste. If you stand for an hour beside the beautiful Lake Karachay where Russia has been dumping her nuclear weapons you will die within weeks of radiation sickness.

These are, if you like, the results of human carelessness. The author also relates instances of human inhumanity. Here are a few statistics

- Number of people who will starve each year — about 60,000,000;
- Number of people who could be adequately fed by the grain saved if Americans reduced their meat intake by 10% — about 60,000,000;
- Pounds of potatoes that can be grown on one acre of land — 20,000;
- Pounds of beef that can be produced on one acre of land — 165;
- Amount of meat imported annually by the United States of America from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and Panama — 200,000,000 pounds;
- Amount of meat eaten by an average person in South America — less than the average American housecat;
- A major contributor to the destruction of rain forests in Latin America — clearing for cattle ranches;
- Thought to be a major contributing factor to cancer in the United States of America — high consumption of meat in the diet.

Chico Mendez in Brazil organised the rubber tappers to save part of the Amazon Forests. He was gunned down by ranchers who wanted to cut down the trees and grow cattle to export beef.

But this is *not* a sad or depressing book. As the title indicates and the author shows, there are individuals, groups, movements in numerous countries throughout the world — he mentions our own Chipko movement — who try to preserve the world, sometimes at serious risk to themselves. As Dr Montaku, the father of the Japanese anti-nuclear movement has said, "A chain reaction of spiritual atoms must replace the chain reaction of material atoms." And this chain reaction goes through time and space. Somewhat like Thoreau at Walden, the author and his wife bought and live in a farm. But they also involve themselves in and help others in their search for a better, cleaner, more serving and helping life. There is hope. This book proves it.

R.H. LESSER

Philosophy

The Neo-Hindu Concept of Man. In the Light of Sri Aurobindo's Evolutionary Vision. By Amalraj SUSAI New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 1993 Pp. xvi-272 Rs 200. ISBN 81-85574-09-X

Christian studies on the philosophy of Aurobindo are not rare. His stress on evolution and his efforts to value the material and the personal aspects of the human at the time when Bergson, Mounier, Marcel and Teilhard were the rage in Europe made Aurobindo seem the ideal partner for an East-West dialogue His thought pattern even became the basic substructure for the Christology of Chenchiah (whom the author of this book does not notice)

The present study focuses on the anthropology of Aurobindo (the exclusive language of the title persists throughout, perhaps unavoidably given the language of Aurobindo himself and of his times) The study is essentially philosophical and establishes a constant dialogue with Western thought, both modern and classical (specially Aristotle, Boethius, Aquinas) Though welcoming the new thrust of Aurobindo in the Indian tradition by his affirmation of the human and the material world, the author can also exercise his critical faculties to point out areas of inconsistency or dissonance with experience

After a short introduction on Aurobindo and his historical and religious context, successive chapters study his general view of reality, his evolutionary perspective, the religious dimension ("yoga"), and the social consciousness which Aurobindo tries to stress The last chapter evaluates these different dimensions of the anthropology of the seer of Pondicherry from a rational perspective

The study is clear, respectful, positive. The final assessment may be stated in the author's own words: "Aurobindo was a child of his own culture. He was deeply convinced of profound values, like the insistence on the religious dimension of man, the need to experience Brahman at an experiential [illegible], and the practical means offered to reach the Absolute. But he was also aware of its limitations, in a particular way, with regard to the lack of insistence on the social dimension of man and the value of the individual. Therefore, he made a bold break with the past in order to integrate the positive values of man proposed by western humanism Such a daring attempt has enabled him to renew Hinduism by enriching its anthropology without sacrificing in any way its authentic and valuable elements. Thus Aurobindo is one of the most eminent contemporary thinkers who have brought about genuine transformation and renewal within modern Hinduism" (247-8)

From the critique it would appear that the vedantic metaphysics he used did not provide Aurobindo with sufficient room to really stress the individual, who always remains submerged in the Absoluteness of Brahman The strong Brahma-centrism of Aurobindo's thought clashes with his integral humanism I do not think that M.N. Dutt should be presented as a Western scholar (p. 5), nor should the Pondicherry Ashram be identified with Auroville (p 14) The book is at any rate an answer to those who complain that Christian-Hindu dialogue is always in one direction Aurobindo shows it is in both.

A valuable addition to the shelf on the great Seer

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection

Vol. LVIII NOVEMBER 1994 No. 11

Editorial

Collaboration

The issue of the Vidyajyoti Journal marks a new development in the service it offers to the Church in India and in the world. The main portion of this issue has been prepared under the responsibility of the Staff of the Jnanadeepa Vidyapeeth in Pune, a leading ecclesiastical institution in the country, with its faculties of Philosophy and Theology and other Departments, its Papal Seminary and others institutions related to it. We hope that this issue will mark the beginning of a more structured collaboration between the Vidyajyoti College of Theology and its sister institution in Pune, a collaboration the modalities of which will have to be formulated in the light of progressive experience.

Much collaboration has of course been given to our Journal by members of the Pune institutions. A look at any Index in the previous volumes of the Journal will discover a number of articles written by the Pune staff or people closely associated with it, like now Fr Neuner For many years the late Fr George Lobo, Professor of the Athaeneum, was a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal. The present issue edited by the staff of the Vidyapeeth marks a new step in this inter-institutional collaboration in the work of the Journal. Such formal cooperation will surely enrich the quality of the service offered by the Journal.

The Pune theological, philosophical and pastoral institutions have a wide contact with the Church in India and with the country at large, and an impressive number of qualified staff. We shall all be happy that their experience, expertise and reflections will now be more regularly communicated to the readers of the Vidyajyoti Journal. Welcome aboard!

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.
Chief Editor

Guest Editorial

"Reflecting on Yesterday, Charting Tomorrow" – a random title from a recent theological review – might aptly describe the mood and the general preoccupation of theologians, pastors and religious in our post-Vatican II age. Predictably, much of the current reflection and concern about the Church has come to focus on the priest who, if not in theory at least in fact, occupies the centre of the Church's stage today. Catholic theology has seen a succession of images of the priest down the ages: the jurisdictional, the cultic, the prophetic and the charismatic. While none of these is exclusive of the others, they do represent paradigm shifts with significantly differing emphases.

The Church's Magisterium in our times has come out with a series of documents concerning the identity and the mission of the priest. Vatican II's decrees on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, on Priestly Formation, *Optatam Totius*; and the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* of the Congregation for Catholic Education are some of the landmarks in this ongoing reflection, which has come to a head with John Paul II's *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. The Church in India has also contributed its share to this reflection in the Charter of Priestly Formation for India, 1988 and the CBCI document on Priestly Formation approved in 1989.

The natural fallout of this reflection has to do with seminary formation since, from the time of the Council of Trent – which may be said to have instituted the seminary as we know it today – priestly formation is largely seen as synonymous with seminary training. The present issue of VJTR addresses itself to the Seminary. It presents a pluridimensional approach to the question of priestly and seminary formation from the historical, the sociological and the spiritual angles.

Fr Errol D'Lima traces in outline the coming to be of the seminary. But, given the vastly changed and changing circumstances of today's world, he questions the relevance and the effectiveness of the Tridentine model for pastoral formation and mission today. Reflection on the seminary stands to gain by help from the human sciences. From the stance of a sociologist, Fr Paul Parathazham analyses the findings of two surveys – the Kerala Youth Survey and a National Survey – made on the attitudes of Catholics with regard to priests. While these are

admittedly limited in scope and content – making abstraction of the 'spiritual' dimension of the vocation to the priesthood, for instance – and their findings do not target seminary training directly, we would do well to listen to this message couched in frank human tones. Finally, a forward-looking reflection on seminary formation cannot but include the basic element of priestly spirituality, which is its soul and wellspring. What has India to contribute on this subject, in the context of inculturation? Fr Subhash Anand delineates the 'features' of *Yeśu Darśana*, the elements of a Hindu-Christian spirituality. This, he submits, is not for the priest only, but for every Indian Christian.

This issue of VJTR represents a modest attempt both to highlight the need for change and to offer some suggestions towards charting a fresh course of priestly and seminary formation, one of the urgent tasks of the Church in India. The search must continue, with preserving and discerning effort, for the type of priestly formation that will respond, ever more adequately, to the demands and challenges facing the priest and his mission in the world of today.

[illegible]

Priestly Formation and Seminary Structure

Errol D'LIMA

From the time of the Decree on reform approved by the Council of Trent (1563) priestly formation has been linked to seminary training. Before that, the idea of a seminary had been reflected in the setting up of the German College in Rome (1552), and in initiatives taken by Cardinal Pole in Tudor England.[1] At the time of Trent, there was need of priests who could read the scriptures as well as preach. The Council felt that a seminary could offer training to future priests in a variety of skills so that they could be proficient in their ministry [2] From that time, priestly formation would be seen as synonymous with being trained in a seminary. Four centuries later, even though new experiments in priestly formation have been tried out – for instance the worker-priests' movement – and some additions made in a seminarian's syllabus of studies, the priest who is formed remains very much a product of the seminary training that Trent envisaged

Yet, changes have occurred the world over and new life-styles continue to emerge. Changes have also affected the Christian community itself At the time of Trent, Europe's Christians lived mostly within the borders of Christendom. And even though it was a time of upheaval because of the Protestant Reformation, still a homogeneous culture and civilization was shared by those in Europe who called themselves Christians In our times, political colonialism is a thing of the past and Third World nations are no longer extensions of an imperial Europe Today a pluralism of

[1]James A O'DONOHOE, *Tridentine Seminary Legislation Its Sources and Its Formation*, Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 2, Place Cardinal Mercier, 1957, Ch III, "The Society of Jesus and the German College", pp 63-87; and Ch. IV, "The Seminary Legislation of Reginald Cardinal Pole," pp 89-120

[2]Decree on reform, canon 18 enumerates what a person should study in a seminary Taken from Norman P TANNER, (ed.) *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Volume II, Trent to Vatican II, Sheed and Ward & Georgetown University Press, 1990, pp 750-753 We shall refer to this as Norman P TANNER, *Decrees ....*

[illegible] faith in around us and hence [illegible] demands made on the Christian community. In this new [illegible], can Tridentine seminary training offer today's candidate for the priesthood the formation he requires?

In this essay, I hope to review briefly the efforts made in the past to provide training to future priests. I shall then identify some of the consequences of the Tridentine decree mandating seminaries, and in conclusion I shall offer some considerations for priestly formation today.

Part One

Efforts in the Past to Train Priests

Little, if any, specific information can be gleaned about the training of priests during the centuries linking the Apostolic times to the Middle Ages. There were schools of theology but they were concerned with modes of theologizing, not with preparing persons for the priestly ministry. Jerome (c. 342-420), one of the great Latin doctors, was not only ordained against his will, but he also believed that the priestly ministry was incompatible with his vocation.[3] An 'apprentice system' of training young men may have been followed, and in this way Christian communities may have been provided with priests.[4]

St Augustine (354-430) and the clergy of his cathedral lived in community, and he is credited with having made efforts to prepare men to function as priests. But what Augustine really succeeded in doing was to foster monastic observance; for all purposes, it was a kind of religious life to which the Augustinian community was committed.

Up until the Middle Ages, a community of religious would offer its members training or formation which would enable them to assume the obligations of religious life. But there is little mention of structures for the training of diocesan priests. During the time of Charlemagne (c.742-814) monasteries and bishops' houses were asked to take up study and provide teachers. These measures strengthened an orthodox understanding of the faith, and Charlemagne as a politico-religious leader succeeded in enforcing Church discipline and in encouraging Christian scholar-

[3]Refer Donald Attwater, *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, reprint 1981, p 185.

[4]Stafford Poole, *Seminary in Crisis*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1965, p. 32.

ship. He did this with the agreement of the popes and the higher clergy. Even so, cathedral schools and those attached to bishops' houses were not conducted exclusively for future clerics.

St. Chrodegang (c.715-766), the bishop appointed to the see of Metz in 742, is usually credited with fostering the education of the clergy in the kingdom of the Franks. He persuaded the cathedral clergy to live a common life and he introduced Gregorian chant and Roman liturgy into the Frankish church. However, by the twelfth century, the functioning of cathedral schools was not an unqualified success.

The Third Lateran Council (1179) found it necessary to issue a canon stating that "in every cathedral school a master is to be assigned some proper benefice so that he may teach the clerics of that church and the poor scholars."[5] When the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) was held, the assembly, in its Constitutions (no. 11. On Schoolmasters), referred to the decree of the Third Lateran Council as one that "is very little observed in many churches." Hence Lateran IV directed not only every cathedral church but also other churches to appoint a master to teach

> the clerics of those and other churches. The metropolitan church shall have a theologian to teach scripture to priests and others and especially to instruct them in matters which are recognized as pertaining to the cure of souls.[6]

The Council of Trent in canon 18 of its Decree on reform, declared

> So that they (the boys in the seminary) may be more appropriately grounded in ecclesiastical studies, they should always have the tonsure and wear clerical dress from the outset; they should study grammar, singing, keeping church accounts and other useful skills; and they should be versed in holy scripture, church writers, homilies of the saints, and the practice of rites and ceremonies and of administering the sacraments, particularly all that seems appropriate to hearing confessions.[7]

In our own days, while the theology of Vatican Council II (1962-65) has redrawn the image of the priest as a proclaimer of the word, as one who celebrates the sacraments, and as one who administers the temporal concerns of the Church, it has assumed that the seminary as mandated by Trent can form priests according to the Vatican II image. Besides, both the Charter of Priestly

---

[5]Norman P. TANNER, *Decrees* ., Volume I, p. 220.

[6]Ibid., Volume I, p. 240.

[7]Ibid., Volume II, p. 751

Formation for India, 1988, and the CBCI document on Priestly Formation, 1989, approved in Shillong take for granted that training for the priesthood will be done in a seminary.[8]

It is a moot point, however, whether the seminary can continue to be the place whether a candidate for the priesthood should be trained. We shall therefore examine the functions that the seminary performed in the training of a priest, in the wake of the Tridentine decree.

Part Two

The Tridentine Concept of the Seminary

It is true to say that the establishing of seminaries in keeping with the Tridentine decree made it possible for priests to be formed intellectually and to have access to theological knowledge that was available through the written and spoken word. The seminary included a "collegium" which made it possible for the seminarian to acquire standard knowledge regarding the sacred sciences and philosophy. Besides, its regimen offered the same chances of formation to all young men in training and gave them a taste of what it meant to live in community.

The official church had a rather negative view of the young man who was a prospective candidate for the seminary. The Tridentine decree assumed that the young person was prone to the pleasures of the world and it made reference to Genesis 8:21 to justify such an understanding: for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. Hence these young men were to be kept sheltered in a seminary away from a threatening world.

The seminary was meant to be a seed-bed of ministers of God. It was to be a locus where the future priest could learn to use the tools of his clerical trade. To make sure that the young men would commit themselves to such learning, the Tridentine canon decreed that those who joined, should have the tonsure and that they should wear clerical dress which would effectively identify them as clerics. In effect, more was being enjoined on the young men than merely opportunities for learning.

The seminary was really a monastery in disguise. It provided

---

[8] *Priestly Formation*, (Document approved by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India at its General Body Meeting, Shillong, November 1989), CBCI Centre, 1, Ashok Place, Near Goldakkhana, New Delhi 110 001. In the article, we shall refer to this as *Priestly Formation*, and the numbers in this document.

the benefits of a "collegium" by offering facilities for the study of theology and the liberal arts, but it also imposed on the seminarian a way of life which was proper to a monk. The Tridentine canon instructed the bishop to see that the seminarian performed a number of religious practices. Further, submission of the seminarian to authority was given great importance, and in its absence, expulsion from the seminary was seen as the remedy.

It must not be forgotten that the concept of the seminary took shape when a particular atmosphere prevailed in the official Church. The medieval papacy could trace its origin back to the Petrine office but over the centuries it had secured for itself the trappings of an absolutist secular state. It was at the time of the Council and a short time after that the Holy Office was established that the Index of Forbidden Books came into existence, that a pope absolved the subjects of a sovereign from owing allegiance to her [9] So when the papacy joined the Council Fathers in decreeing that seminaries should be established, it can be presumed that such an institution would not jeopardize the interests of the papacy In fact a careful reading of the seminary decree details all the duties which the seminarian was obliged to fulfil but does not mention any mention of his rights While the seminary contributed to the intellectually-ordered and humanist-oriented formation of the future priest it also implicitly commended unquestioning obedience to one's superior, passive conformity with law and custom, and rubrical exactness in the carrying out of the liturgy

The sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation can be seen as an effort to make authority, even when it was papal, accountable. It did not dispute the need to acknowledge the claims made by Christianity on the believers but in the prevailing decay and corruption – even at the papal court – it wished to find out if the authority exercised by the hierarchical Church had its origin and sanction from God Secondly, the ecclesiology of Robert Bellarmine

[9] (a) Paul III (1534-1549) established the Congregation of the Roman Inquisition or the Holy Office (1542) as the "central authority to combat heresy and possessing punitive powers of censorship " (J N.D Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, reprint, 1987, p 262)

(b) Paul IV (1555-1559) created the Index of Forbidden Books in 1557 The same Pope confined the Jews "strictly in ghettos in Rome and the papal state, and forced them to wear distinctive headgear" (*ibid* , p 266)

(c) Pius V (1566-1574)· "His excommunication and purported deposition of Elizabeth I of England (25 Feb 1570), the last such sentence on a reigning monarch by a pope, was an ineffective anachronism " (*ibid* , p 269)

(1547-1621) viewed the Church as having a pyramid structure with the papacy at the apex. In such a structure, authority in the Church was seen more as power that came from the top rather than as responsibility that obliged one to serve the community. The inferior received the 'power' of authority because the superior bestowed it on him. Finally, with the concept of priesthood centred almost exclusively on the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance, the observing of liturgical law and rubrics gained an unhealthy importance and prominence over all else.

The need for unquestioning obedience and passive conformity in the clergy was secured by decreeing that future priests should be schooled in monastic discipline, follow a course of prescribed studies (Scholasticism), and practice a spirituality more suited to the solitary or the monk. The seminary was an institution suitable for such schooling, study and spirituality. Further, within the confines of its walls a centralized control could be effectively exercised And this structural element of centralized control continues in seminaries even today!

It is a moot point whether the seminary with its structure of centralized control can truly realize the objectives of priestly formation as set down in the document *Priestly Formation.* In speaking of the image of the priest, the document describes him as continuing "the mission of Christ combining in himself the roles of prophet of God's Kingdom, animator and builder of the community and servant of the worshiping community" (2.1). But the seminary structure militates against the prophetic image; its monastic spirituality distances those in the seminary from the community of the believers outside it, and the liturgical norms which are cultivated are those decreed and imposed by the centralized authority and not those which are inspired by the local church

In speaking about the agents of (seminary) formation (10), *Priestly Formation* makes mention of the Ordinary, Rector, Spiritual Directors, Teachers and Moderators, Parish Priests, and of course the seminarian himself (10.1). Almost as a concession, it includes the laity ("especially parents") (10.7), but it fails to make specific mention of the most important agent: the community of Christians in the parish, the diocese, the world at large. Is this omission not due to the fact that the seminary structure effectively separates its inmates from the secular world of everyday life? The directive about giving seminarians "opportunities to live in

continual contact with and insertion (sic!) into the local communities where they will work" (5.3) is a poor substitute for either living in a Christian community or for experiencing the lot of the poor (5.3).

Structures of accountability are important in formation, and *Priestly Formation* in the sections "Agents of Formation" (10), "Formation of Formators" (11), "Structures of Formation" (12), and "Evaluation" (13) implicitly assumes that these exist. But among them, no structure is envisaged for a seminarian's formal accountability to his most important constituency, the Christian community in the parish or diocese

Part Three

Priestly Formation: The Need for a new Paradigm

If the priest's task (his office) is to enable a believing community to celebrate its worship of God, he must prepare for it by being part of that community, sharing its hopes and failures, its triumphs and trials He must also be convinced that God's presence will be discovered palpably in the lives of the members of that community Such a preparation demands a continual and in-depth insertion in the life of the community and this is something that the seminary and its structure do not allow In fact, the long years spent in a seminary and away from a living community seem calculated to make the future priest dysfunctional[1]

If the establishment of seminaries was hailed as a lasting achievement of Trent, it was because it offered a structure to train future priests in the knowledge of scripture and theology It could do so because Christian society in that age was feudal and stratified everyone knew his or her position in society and the Christendom concept offered Church and state a *modus vivendi* The theology of those times followed a philosophical system in which the different elements of the system were organically connected This was the theology of the Schoolmen and the medium used was Latin This theology was available in text-books and doing theology meant primarily studying these books. What better place to pursue such study than a seminary where conceptual abstractions would not be challenged by experience?

Today, however, we live in a post-Enlightenment society where despite the respect paid to St Thomas, a well-defined and functioning pluralism in theology is countenanced and cultivat-

ed. The Middle Ages which drew up the ideal *humanum* as a product of the liberal arts has given way to an age of science and technology where knowledge is derived from human experience, with the help of the secular disciplines and life sciences. In today's world, the sacred sciences must be interfaced with the social sciences so that true knowledge emerges. Such an attempt calls for a clear, continual and committed insertion into the world of happenings and change, and hence into a living community of persons. It is not clear how the seminary could effectively guarantee such insertion.

Karl Rahner noted the importance of the paradigm shift that had taken place in sacramental theology He pointed out that sacramental grace should not be seen as a movement from the Church to the world but the opposite. What takes place in the world of everyday life is already an encounter of God with persons who live their lives unselfishly for others. What we celebrate in the sacrament is the ritualizing of that encounter. We stand a good chance of living our lives in depth if we become aware of the paradigm shift that has taken place in our understanding of the working of sacraments and their effect on our lives [10]

Rahner correctly drew the theological consequences of the dogmatic fact that we live in a "graced existence". The secular world is already the theatre in which persons encounter God, and the Incarnation in Jesus Christ was and is the definitive affirmation of this reality Is it not unchristian to claim that to train a priest he must first be sheltered from the community which he will be serving? The seminary is not merely a place where one studies. As an institution, it symbolizes a way of life that understands and acknowledges the claims of a centralized authority; however, by its very constitution, it will find it very difficult to identify with the needs and concerns of living Christian communities.

The seminary belongs to a formation-paradigm that may have served the needs of a different age. To continue with it now will probably bring us paradigm paralysis! The seminarian's disenchantment with seminary studies along with his desire to pursue university studies, the numerous attempts to form smaller groups in seminary establishments in the interests of personal-

[10] Karl RAHNER, "How to receive a sacrament and mean it", in *Theology Digest*. Volume 19, No 3, Autumn 1971, pp 227-234.

ized formation, the tired exhortations of rectors and spiritual guides to persuade seminarians to attend daily mass or to practise "spiritual" exercises —these, and many more signs, warn us that the disease is already infecting us.

The need for a new paradigm of formation is felt by many. We know of a past that cannot serve us, but we still have to continue searching for a future that waits to be born. What must we do, where do we begin to construct that future?

We need to articulate anew the goals of priestly formation and look for structures that would best serve them The articulation and the search must be done with the tools of today's scientific environment along with the help that the sacred sciences give us But the articulating and the search must take place in, with, and through the community of believers since the priest is meant to help in the celebrating of their grace-filled lives. Such a process supposes a measure of theologizing which includes reflecting on a faith experience that leads to action.

The subject of such theologizing must be not only the professional theologian, the members of the hierarchy, the candidate for the priesthood, but also the Christian believers, the community of faith. Before the church decides on an alternate mode of priestly formation, it must make sure that the needs and concerns of Christian believers are identified and clearly articulated. The community of faith must be assured that today's training for the priesthood forms an authentic minister of God who helps them to live out the gospel imperative

In a new paradigm, the candidate for the priesthood could continue to live his daily life and go about his occupations as others in society do Today's candidate for the priesthood is not an illiterate; most often he possesses at least a bachelor's degree. He would have to spend some time both to obtain special skills and knowledge and to integrate these in himself. He will also need time to prepare himself for the vocation of proclaiming the word and celebrating the sacraments. But to realize this, does he require a time-span of at least six years? It is true that an alternate paradigm will raise questions about the meaning of the clerical state and the charism of celibacy in the vocation of the priest. At this point, it is not possible to address ourselves to such questions and explore their implications. All that has been attempted in this essay is to examine the suitability of the seminary structure for priestly formation.

VJTR 58 (1994) 701-715

Issues in Priestly Formation: A Question of Credibility

Paul V. PARATHAZHAM

Until recently, modern man's disenchantment with religion was axiomatic in sociology. The belief in the decline and eventual disappearance of religion was anchored in the theory of secularization, the master model of sociological analysis of religion during the post World War II decades. Jeffrey Hadden has summarized the basic assumptions of this theory in just three sentences "Once the world was filled with the sacred in thought, practice and institutional form. After the Reformation and Renaissance, the forces of modernization swept across the globe and secularization, a corollary historical process, loosened the dominance of the sacred. In due course, the sacred shall disappear altogether except, possibly, in the private realm" (1989: 13).

The secularization theory's assumptions about the role of the sacred were extended also to the analysis of the role of the custodians of the sacred, the clergy. It was argued that in the past when social order was perceived to be coextensive with the sacred order, "there could be no social orders without holy orders" (Martin, 1978: 282). The role of the clergyman was generally seen as integral to the social order, and therefore, his presence was deemed appropriate, even necessary, at all major events in the life of the individual and the community. However, the redefinition of the role of religion in secular modernity will, it was suggested, precipitate a serious crisis for the clergy (Martin, 1978. 278-305). The progressive disengagement of society from religion will invariably result in the emancipation of key areas of social life from clerical tutelage. As the realm of the sacred shrinks, the constituency of its guardians, too, dwindles. The clerical role, which was previously central to social life, now becomes peripheral. A dominant elite is reduced to a marginal elite.

As Jeffrey Hadden rightly points out: "Few forecasts have been uttered with more unshakable confidence than sociology's belief that religion is in the midst of its final death throes" (Hadden, 1989: 3). History, however, has failed to oblige the secularization theorists. Even as we approach the close of the twentieth century, there are no signs as yet of the anticipated death of religion. On the contrary, available evidence seems to suggest that what is happening is quite the opposite. Even in the most modernized of nations, religion has shown remarkable resilience (Finke and Stark, 1988). The effervescence of new religious movements, the proliferation of new religious cults and sects, and the re-engagement of religion in the political process of an increasing number of nation-states, have forced the sociologists to reexamine the premises of the secularization thesis. Today most sociologists of religion would admit that the news of the death of religion, to paraphrase Mark Twain, has been greatly exaggerated (see, for example, Hammond, 1985; Stark and Bainbridge, 1985; Hadden, 1987). The critique of the secularization paradigm has revealed that it is neither theoretically robust nor empirically valid. It is not a theory in the sense of an interrelated set of empirically tested propositions, but an ideological doctrine based on unexamined presuppositions, a biased legacy the social sciences inherited from the Enlightenment. As suggested above, modern man's growing disaffection with the clergy was viewed as an epiphenomenon of secularization, a by-product of his increasing disillusionment with religion itself. The decline of the social significance of the clerical role was seen as a function of a deepening crisis of faith among the people. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that modern man's supposed disenchantment with the sacred is a social myth. If so, could it be that modern man's proverbial disillusionment with the clergy, too, is a social myth? If not, what are the factors that account for the marginalization of the clergy in the modern world?

Based on data from two social surveys, this paper first attempts to show that the Catholic clergy in India is in the throes of a serious crisis of credibility; and that the erosion of clerical credibility is not simply a function of a general decline of faith among the people as it is generally assumed. The paper then goes on to analyse the problem of credibility in terms of certain aspects of seminary formation in India today.

I. A Crisis of Credibility

A. The Kerala Youth Survey

Recently a state-wide survey was conducted among the Catholic youth in Kerala in order to ascertain the validity of the secularization thesis that modernization results in a widespread decline of faith. Kerala was selected as the venue because of the high degree of literacy and modernization of consciousness in that state. Employing the multi-stage cluster sampling technique, a sample of one thousand young Catholics from across the state was chosen as respondents of the study. The response rate for the study was a phenomenal 92.3%. Its findings, therefore, have an exceptionally high degree of reliability.

The survey sought to investigate, among other things, how the youth perceive their priests. The questionnaire contained a number of statements about the life and ministry of priests and the respondents were asked to indicate whether each of these statements applied to "almost all", "the majority", "a good number" or "a few/none" of the priests. The findings are presented in table 1.

TABLE 1
Youth's Perceptions of the Clergy
(in per cent)[1]

Catholic Priests (are).	Almost all	the majority	a good number	a few/none
1. men of God	23	24	23	30
2. committed to service	18	22	23	37
3 men of moral integrity	8	22	26	44
4. honest	9	22	21	48
5 nepotistic	13	24	19	43
6 faithful to the vow of celibacy	14	27	21	39
7 seek worldly pleasures	15	28	19	33
8 authoritarian	15	25	17	42
9. attached to money and possessions	11	26	17	42
10. able leaders	20	28	24	28
11. progressive	10	25	30	34

[1]Total number of cases were 923 Percentages were calculated after excluding missing values, which in no case exceeds 3 per cent. Percentages may not add up 100 because of rounding error.

Taken together, the data in table 1 add up to a strong indictment of the Kerala Catholic clergy. Not even one-third of the youth believe that the majority of the clergy are men of honesty and integrity. In fact, nearly fifty percent of them think that only "a few" of them are honest. Only about forty percent feel that the majority of the priests are committed to service or faithful to the vow of celibacy. Two out of five respondents see these qualities only in "a few" priests. Less than half of the respondents say that the majority of the priests are men of God or are able leaders. On renunciation of worldly pleasures, detachment from material possessions, and nepotism, the youth's perceptions are somewhat less negative. Even in these respects, however, a substantial number of the youth are disillusioned with the clergy.

The data seem to make one thing quite clear: the youth have lost faith in the clergy What is most disturbing about the findings is that the clergy's loss of credibility is not limited to the specifically priestly qualities; it extends to the basic human qualities as well.

This overwhelmingly negative image of the clergy is in sharp contrast to the youth's perceptions of the church. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement on a number of general questions on the church in Kerala. The youth's responses to these questions are presented in table 2.

TABLE 2

Perceptions of the Church
(Per cent responding "agree strongly" or "agree")
(N = 923)

Kerala Catholics have reason to be proud of their Church.	93.4
A Catholic must be prepared to undertake even a political struggle to protect Church's interests	89 4
Every Catholic is obliged to make financial contribution to the Church according to his or her ability	92 9
The Church has greater concern for the poor than the other religious groups in Kerala	82.7
Communists are more committed than the church to the building up of a just and egalitarian society in Kerala	21.6
In fairness and justice the Church-run institutions are superior to those of the other religious groups	74.9

The data in table 2 show that the Catholic youth have a strong sense of identity with the Church. There is no evidence of a significant erosion of commitment to the institutional Church among the youth. On the contrary, the overwhelming majority are proud of their Church; they are prepared to support it financially and, if need be, to engage in a political struggle to protect its interests. They also believe that the Church institutions maintain higher standards of justice and fairness compared to similar institutions run by other religious groups. They feel the Church is more committed than the other religious groups and even the Communist party to the welfare of the poor and the promotion of a just and egalitarian social order. The strong negative attitudes of the youth towards the clergy, therefore, cannot be seen as an expression of their alienation from the institutional Church.

Nor is the youth's loss of trust in the clergy a reflection of an erosion of their faith. The data in table 3 suggest that almost all of them believe in God and subscribe to the major teachings of the Church.

TABLE 3

Beliefs of the Youth
(Per cent responding "believe")

God exists	97 8
Unrepentant sinners will be damned	89 4
Jesus Christ rose from the dead	95.6
There is "real presence" in the Eucharist	93 8
The Pope is infallible	67 5
Without faith, one cannot find meaning in life	87.0
Prayer is basically useless	14.7
Christ is just a prophet like Buddha or Mohammed	14.3
Christianity is not superior to other religions	15.8

Are the youth, perhaps, so critical of the clergy because they are no longer "practising" Catholics? Here again the evidence is negative. 91.6 % of the respondents said that they participate in the eucharistic celebration at least once a week. Only 3.7 % reported that they never go to confession. 83.5 % pray privately every day and nearly as many (78.2%) take part in the family prayer on most days.

The decline of the moral authority of the clergy, 'anti-clerical-

ism' in clerical parlance, is usually attributed to the impersonal forces of modernization and the growing secular consciousness. The question whether it could possibly be a result of the erosion of the moral calibre of the clergy themselves was seldom addressed seriously. The findings of the survey reviewed above seem to suggest that the credibility crisis of the clergy cannot be explained away as a consequence of a general crisis of faith in the modern world.

We have so far examined only the evidence from Kerala. Is the situation significantly different in other parts of India? To answer this question we shall now turn to the data from the national survey on priests.

B. The National Survey on Priests

A national survey on priests was undertaken in the latter half of the 80s at the behest of the Commission for Clergy and Religious of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (Parathazham, 1987). The survey was part of the process of writing a new charter of priestly formation for India The main purpose of the study was to understand the Catholics' expectations about their priests on the one hand, and their perceptions of the priests vis-a-vis these expectations, on the other

A nation-wide probability sample of six thousand lay people was selected as respondents of the survey These were interviewed by a team of trained investigators in fifteen different languages.[2]

The survey sought to elicit the views of the respondents on two types of expectations about the clergy expectations about what sort of a person a priest ought to be (qualities), and expectations about what kind of ministries he ought to perform (functions) Of the sixteen qualities listed in the survey, the five qualities which the laity deemed most important in a priest are, in the order of preference faithfulness to the vow of celibacy, obedience to bishops/superiors, holiness of life, being devout in the celebration of the liturgy, and being learned in religious matters. The five top-rated functions among the twenty listed are: teaching the Christian message, promotion of the spiritual welfare of the people, community-building, working for the welfare of the

[2]The survey was done also among priests, sisters, seminarians and bishops Only some selected findings of the laity survey which are relevant to the present discussion are reported here.

poor and giving helpful advice in the confessional. Between qualities and functions, the qualities were considered more important than the functions.

The rank order comparisons of expectations and perceptions showed that, while there was a positive correlation between perceptions and expectations with respect to the functions of priest, there was hardly any correspondence between expectations and perceptions with regard to the quality life of the priest[3]. This is all the more significant because, in the people's minds, the quality of a priest's life is far more important than the functions he performs. And the gap between expectations and perceptions was widest precisely in those qualities which were considered by the laity most important for a priest. In other words, the qualities the people value most in priests were found to be generally absent in priests.

The national survey also showed that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of the priests by the educated laity compared to those of the uneducated laity. The laity's perceptions of the priests cross-tabulated by education level are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Laity's Perceptions of Priest by Education Level

MOST PRIESTS (ARE)	Uneducated	Educated
	(in per cent)[4]	
Holy persons	52	13
fair and impartial	45	11
courteous in dealings	49	12
simple in life-style	44	12
faithful to celibacy	53	26
democratic	41	11
obedient	63	24
good preachers	52	9
able administrators	50	14
learned in religious matters	66	46

The data in table 4 makes it amply clear that the educated laity of India see the priests in a very poor light. The figures in the

[3]Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient for the functions was .82, while it was only .27 for the qualities.

[4]Percentages do not add up to hundred because the middle education categories are omitted from the table.

'educated' column in table 4 are comparable to the data in table 1 about the Kerala youth's perceptions of the clergy. Among the educated laity the priests of today do not command even a modicum of respect. As literacy rate among the Catholic population increases and the ranks of the educated grow, Catholic priests will no longer be in a position to assume leadership roles in Christian communities.

The educated laity is not any less religious in their outlook and practice than the uneducated. Therefore, their criticism of the clergy cannot be interpreted as a mark of their alienation from religion itself.

It is also important to note that, in fact, today the laity in general have a relatively more favourable view of the priests, compared to that of the seminarians, the sisters and the priests themselves (for details, see Parathazham, 1987). Therefore, the laity's negativism towards the clergy cannot be interpreted as the part of ingroup-outgroup dynamics

The data reviewed above suggest that the clergy's loss of credibility cannot be simply attributed to extrinsic factors like modernization or secularization. The erosion of their moral authority seems to be the result of the fact that the image the clergy project no longer inspires people's trust and confidence This raises the question of the effectiveness of priestly formation today We shall now turn to the analysis of certain aspects of priestly formation, which appear to be related to the declining social significance of the clergy today

II. Dilemas of Priestly Formation[5]

A. Leader or Follower: A Basic Ambiguity

There is an ambivalence with regard to the basic thrust of priestly formation Should it aim at training good leaders or good followers? This ambivalence appears to be related to a tension between two conflicting impulses in the Church at large: the impulse for stability and survival on the one hand, and the impulse towards change and growth, on the other. Obviously this tension, when held in balance, is a healthy one. However, the socio-logic of institutionalization tends more towards order and

[5]By priestly formation, we mean the mainline, traditional seminary system. The present discussion may not be relevant to the new experiments in formation being undertaken by some dioceses and religious congregations.

stability than towards growth and change. Therefore, the institutional Church, as represented by the authorities, would be naturally inclined to form the priests into conformists who are committed to the status quo, loyal and docile followers who will fall in line and toe the line. In other words, the institutional Church has an interest in ensuring that priestly formation is structured in a manner that reinforces conformity and obedience in the seminarians.

On the other hand, the communities to whom the priests minister, require them to be leaders, who will articulate the goals of the community and mobilize the resources, spiritual as well as material, towards the realization of these goals. The community would want their priests to be good leaders, whereas the institutional Church would rather mould them into good followers. And the seminary finds itself at the cutting edge of these conflicting demands.

It is not easy to train someone into a good leader and a good follower at the same time. To be a good leader, one should be self-assertive, innovative, and decisive, with the ability and willingness to take risks. (See Lord et al., 1986, Constantini and Craig, 1980.) But these are hardly the values that are reinforced by the present structures of formation. With its accent on conformity and submissiveness, formation seems to stifle rather than to promote the leadership qualities in candidates. In fact, if not in principle, the ideal seminarian is still one who conforms best. "People who conform are likely to have more negative self-concepts and to score low on measures of leadership ability and high on measures of authoritarianism" (Brigham, 1991: 202).

Training for leadership roles requires a structure of formation that is radically different from one that aims at enforcing conformity. Since formation institutions are controlled by the Church authorities and the formation personnel appointed by them, more often than not it is their interest of training good followers that ultimately prevails in seminaries. This is borne out by the fact that the fitness of a candidate for the priesthood is adjudged in most seminaries almost exclusively on the basis of how good a follower he has been in the seminary.

B. The Presumption of Right Motivation

When a candidate enters the seminary, the presumption is that he aspires to become a priest for the right reasons. Formation

personnel generally take it for granted that he has the right motivation. The candidates are seldom subjected to systematic tests to check if this presumption is true. It is by no means easy to determine if a candidate has the right motivation. Moreover, the few psychological tests which are available for this purpose have dubious validity. Nevertheless, ascertaining the motivation of candidates is arguably the most important imperative in formation today. While in the past a presumption of right motivation may have been warranted, there are reasons to suspect that this is no longer the case.

1. Evidence of Mixed Motivation

As indicated earlier, the national survey on priests included also a survey of all the seminarians of India. To the question if they "now regret their decision to become a priest", one out of every eight seminarians (12.5%) answered positively. Another 7.5% indicated that they were unsure if they regretted it or not. Taken together, it means that one out of every five candidates (20%) who steps up to the altar to be ordained today does so reluctantly and regretfully. He would walk away if he had another choice, in real terms, that is.

In all probability, the number of those who feel compelled by force of circumstances to pursue the priesthood against their will is much higher than those indicated by the survey. Most people would find it hard to admit even to themselves such a basic contradiction in their lives And even if one were to be honest with oneself in this regard, he would be reluctant to report it in a public survey because of the strong "social desirability" factor associated with it.

Another finding of the survey that is related to the above is that more than half of the seminarians (52%) said that they "joined the seminary at too early an age." In other words, when they joined they were too young to understand the implications of the step they were taking. This seems to amount to an admission, if indirect, that they did not join for the right reasons and with the right motivation.

These findings point to the fact that there are in our seminaries today a good number of candidates who are there for the wrong reasons, and yet are unwilling or unable to leave the seminary.

2. The Shift in the Demographic Base of Vocations

Whether this phenomenon bears any relationship to the recent shift in the sociodemographic base of vocations in India merits investigation. In the past vocations were drawn largely from the middle class. In fact, the socio-economic status of a candidate's family was one of the criteria for his admission to the seminary. It is no secret that today vocations come mostly from the not-so well-to-do sections of the Catholic population. There are indications that priesthood has virtually ceased to be a "career option" for the average middle class youth.

That the Catholic clergy is slowly shedding its elitist character is indeed a welcome development, especially in view of the fact that the majority of the Catholics, like their fellow-countrymen, belong to the not-so-well-to-do segment of our society. This gives one reason to hope that the clergy of the future will be able to respond more sensitively to the concerns and problems of the common people.

This development, however, poses new challenges to formation. It increases the likelihood of mixed or wrong motivation in the candidates, since priesthood may appeal to them also as a channel of social and economic mobility. Some feel that the problem is exacerbated by the fact that those who are attracted to the priesthood do not constitute a cross-section of even the economically weaker sections. They seem to belong to a residual category of those who are weak not only economically but also academically. The formation programmes and policies operative in mainline seminaries today were framed with the average middle class candidate in mind. These appear to be quite ineffective in dealing with formation needs of the new type candidate who enters the seminary today.

C. Priesthood as a Quasi-Ascribed Status

1. Principle of Assumed Fitness

Parallel to the presumption of right motivation, there is another principle that informs priestly formation: the principle of assumed fitness. A candidate who enters the seminary is presumed to be fit for the priesthood unless proven otherwise. And the onus of proof is on the formators. At no point is a candidate required positively to demonstrate his aptitude for the position he seeks. There are no established minimum standards to main-

this, no specified level of performance to attain, even in areas that are vital for the successful exercise of one's ministry, such as human relations, communication skills, community building capabilities, or commitment to justice. Priesthood is probably the only "profession" where an applicant is almost automatically awarded the position he applies for, unless the selectors can conclusively demonstrate that he is not fit for it.

2. *"Vianney Syndrome"*

There is one area, however, where the candidates to the priesthood were traditionally required to demonstrate their capability positively by passing examinations, namely, the study of philosophy and theology. But even here examinations have only token significance nowadays. To begin with, very few fail in the seminary examinations. The few who happen to fail are passed as a matter of course after a second attempt. It is a very rare occurrence that a candidate is failed a second time. These days one hardly ever hears of anyone being disqualified from priesthood because he failed to get through the examinations.

Priestly formation seems to suffer from a peculiar malaise that may be termed the "Vianney syndrome". Whenever the lack of intellectual ability in a candidate is brought to the attention of those concerned, the predictable reaction is something like this: "Let him be ordained; after all, the Church needs Vianneys too"! It is unfortunate that the name of the patron of the pastoral clergy is invoked, more often than not, as an excuse for mediocrity and an apology for indifferent performance. Under the saintly aura of Vianney, mediocrity seems to metamorphose into some sort of a virtue! That Vianney was by no means the kind of dullard that he is often made out to be is another matter altogether.

3. *The Theology of Vocation*

The ideological roots of the "Vianney Syndrome" may be traced to the theology of priesthood, which interprets priesthood as a vocation, a purely gratuitous call, which, by definition, is not contingent on the merits or the capabilities of the one who is called. God, in His infinite wisdom, calls whom He chooses; and He empowers whom He calls. There are no sure, readily recognizable, external signs of this calling.

It is not within the competence of sociology to evaluate the "manifest functions" of theological discourse, namely, functions

or consequences that are consciously intended by the theologian. However, theological doctrines, like all other ideas, have also "latent functions" or consequences that are unintended, and often unrecognized, by the theologian.

The theological notion of vocation as a gratuitous call from God appears to have a latent function of projecting the priesthood more like an "ascribed" status than an "achieved" one. An ascribed status is a social position that is accorded to someone on the basis of who that person is, while an achieved status is a position that one attains on the basis of what that person can do. In Hinduism, for example, priesthood is an ascribed status assigned on the basis of one's caste. The capabilities of the individual Brahmin are inconsequential to his social position. Being born as a Brahmin entitles one to be a priest.

Sociologically, the position of the Catholic priest is not very different from that of a Hindu priest. One is born into it; the other is called into it. Essentially both are ascribed statuses. Theoretically at least, a Catholic priest's authority does not stem from his competence but from the gratuitous call of God.

Traditional societies were characterized by the predominance of ascribed statuses People were evaluated not on the basis of what they were capable of, but rather on the basis of who they were, in terms of caste, colour, sex, genealogy, etc. As long as tradition dominated, a priest could successfully command respect and allegiance on the basis of the claim that he is one who is called by God. Modernization, however, entails, among other things, the transition from ascribed status systems to achieved status systems In the modern world, people are evaluated increasingly on the basis of their competence, and not on the basis of caste, colour, sex, or even "cassock". Today a priest can hardly claim the right to lead on the basis of a putative call from God. Respect can no longer be demanded, it has to be earned. Competence is the only claim to authority that the modern man is inclined to respect.

The data of the surveys cited above clearly show that the laity, by and large, are hardly impressed by the competence of their clergymen. If no steps are taken to remedy this, the day may not be far off when the role of the priest becomes functionally equivalent to the role of a Hindu Poojari, whose social significance is limited to certain ritual occasions.

[illegible] Formation ?

In medical language, illnesses which are inadvertently induced in the patient by the physician himself through his diagnosis or treatment are termed iatrogenic. This term may be applied [illegible] formation as well to designate the possible deformative consequences of formation itself.

Peter Lourdes and others in a recent comparative study of personality profiles of a sample of clergy and laity concluded: "Clergy appeared less psychologically positive than the laity in the 30 traits we examined" (1991: 134). Their finding seems to be corroborated by similar studies in India as well as abroad (see Lourdes et al. 1991: 16-33 and 75-126). It is important to note that the authors of these studies themselves have adverted to the tentative nature of their conclusions because of the limitations of their study designs. Nevertheless, the cumulative evidence of these studies cannot easily be ignored. It is all the more paradoxical when one considers the extensive spiritual and psychological formation a candidate undergoes before he is admitted to the priesthood or religious life. Does the priestly life perhaps tend to attract people who suffer from adjustment problems in life? Or, could it be that the adjustment problems and other personality disorders of the clergy are iatrogenic, in the sense that they are induced by the structures and processes of formation itself?

Some research exists which seems to point in this direction. The studies of K C. Chacko and of Cruice Sanjivi cited by Lourdes et al. (1991. 81-84) indicate that the candidates showed more adequate personal and social adjustment than priests. The Sanjivi study also reported that the seminarians scored higher than the priests on responsibility Comparisons of sisters with candidates also have yielded similar results.

Conclusion

We have discussed some of the sociological sources of the credibility crisis of the Catholic clergy in India today. This analysis is admittedly partial and incomplete because the priesthood cannot be simply subjected to a regular sociological analysis like any other profession or career. Priesthood has a spiritual dimension and therefore its dynamics cannot be adequately understood solely in terms of empirical processes. We have not incorporated this dimension into our analysis in order to avoid missing the

frames of reference. We have chosen to highlight the sociological aspects as these receive scant attention in the usual discussions on priestly formation.

There are no quick solutions or easy remedies to the problems that seem to beset the Catholic priesthood. Nor do we have adequate scientific data to understand fully the forces that impinge on priestly formation, such as the shift in the sociodemographic base of vocations, the factors that affect the motivation of the candidates, the impact of the process of modernization on the role of the priest and the possible negative consequences of a prolonged formation in an artificial setting. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive scientific study of all the relevant aspects of priestly formation, which would help the Church to make informed decisions about the kind of changes that need to be introduced in the area of formation.

If we are to shore up the flagging credibility of the priest, the Church must shed its complacency and act quickly and decisively Otherwise it may be too late!

REFERENCES

BRIGHAM John C 1991 *Social Psychology* New York Harpar Collins.

CONSTANTINI E and K CRAIG 1980 "Personlaity and Politicians," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 38 641-661

FINKE Roger and Rodney STARK 1988 "Religious Economies and Sacred Canopies Religious Mobilization in American Cities 1906" *American Sociological Review* 53 (February) 41-49

GREELEY Andrew M 1971 *Unsecular Man* New York. Schocken Books

HADDEN Jeffrey K 1989 "Desacralizing Secularization Theory" In *Secularization and Fundamentalism Reconsidered* Vol III edited by Jeffrey Hadden and Anson Shupe New York Paragon House

HAMMOND Philip E. ed 1985 *The Sacred in a Secular Age* Berkeley: University of California Press

LORD Robert *et al* 1986. "A Meta analysis of the Relation Between Personality Traits and Leadership Perceptions" *Journal of Applied Psychology* 71 402-410.

LOURDES Peter et al 1991 *The Human Face of Clergy* Pune: National Vocation Service Centre.

MARTIN David. 1978 *A General Theory of Secularization*. New York: Harper and Row.

PARATHAZHAM Paul V 1987 *Priests in Perspective* Pune: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth.

STARK, Rodney and William S BAINBRIDGE. 1985 *The Future of Religion* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Yesu-Darsana: Towards a Hindu-Christian Spirituality

Subhash ANAND

I have been asked to share with you some reflections from the Indian perspective on the spirituality of a diocesan priest.[1] Let me begin by saying that I am not quite comfortable with the term 'spirituality' and the expression 'spiritual life'. This vocabulary belongs to a dualistic world-view that makes a sharp distinction between spirit and matter. The latter is seen as an obstacle for the former. Hence to be spiritual means to free oneself from the clutches of matter. This kind of spirituality fosters a negative attitude towards life in this world, towards inter-personal relationships, towards human feelings and specially towards their bodily expression. History provides us ample evidence to show how harmful this approach has been. I believe that matter has been doubly sanctified by God: first when He created it and later on when His Son enfleshed himself in it. I believe that spirit and matter are both integral to human existence not only here but also hereafter. Having said this I am still obliged to continue using the earlier vocabulary as we do not yet have a more suitable alternative.

Further, it may surprise you that I do not think that there is specifically such a thing as the spirituality of a diocesan priest. For many Christians spirituality denotes a list of pious exercises and also some prohibitions. A person is considered spiritual if he attends Mass regularly, is faithful to his daily rosary, participates in some prayer meetings, novenas, pilgrimages, etc. He is considered spiritual if he gives up drinks during Lent, does not indulge in vulgar jokes, etc. This is a functional approach to spirituality. While we do need some pious exercises and

[1] This is the revised text of a lecture delivered during the Centenary Celebrations of the Papal Seminary, Pune (October 25 -29, 1993) The style of direct, personal address has been retained on purpose.

some disciplinary prohibitions, these do not constitute the core of spirituality. Similarly some religious claim to follow a particular school of spirituality. If by this they mean some particular approach to prayer and life in community, then they too are functional in their approach. Some may indicate two features they consider as characteristic of the spirituality of a diocesan priest: his communion with the other members of the *unum presbyterium* and his loyalty to his ordinary. But even the religious are expected to be in communion with their co-religious and to have loyalty towards their superior.

For me spirituality consists in having the mind of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 2.16; Phil 2.5) and having it as fully as possible. Hence there cannot be different spiritualities but only particular applications of this one mind to concrete situations within different contexts. Only in this sense may one speak of the spirituality of a diocesan priest. Even then there cannot be one spirituality, because the actual life situations are not the same for all diocesan priests. For instance a priest who works in a well established urban parish lives in a context totally different from that of his friend who works in a village with hardly any baptized persons. The reflections that are presented here are offered to all Christians and each one has to find how best they can help him or her in her or his life situation.

I also maintain that there is no such thing as a unified Indian perspective. Even within Hinduism there are schools of thought that contradict each other, though subsequent thinkers may suggest that they are complementary. Hence I shall confine myself to some early Sanskrit texts and even then I shall not try to systematize them into a coherent programme for life but see them as a springboard for a reflection that I think is deeply Hindu and Christian while being at the same time sufficiently universal and truly contemporary. I think it is possible to make such a claim if we are trying to spell out not so much the content but the approach to spirituality and if the focus of our reflection is provided not by a particular tradition or scriptural authority but emerges from the depth that we all have in common. I believe that what binds us all together is the primordial desire to live.

Brahmacarya: The Search for the Fullness of Reality

Jesus understood this deep longing of all human hearts Hence he assures us that he has come that we may have life and have it abundantly (Jn 10 10) This fullness of life consists in knowing God and Jesus whom He has sent (Jn 17 3) [2] The Upanishads too are concerned with this longing of our hearts Three thousand years ago a sage expressed this desire in the following prayer

> From the unreal lead me to the real
> From darkness lead me to light
> From death lead me to immortality (BU 1 3 28) [3]

The text reporting this prayer immediately adds that the unreal (*asat*) and darkness (*tamas*) are the same as death (*mrtyu*), while the real (*sat*) and light (*jyoti*) are the same as immortality (*amrta*) Our experience teaches us that appearances can and do darken our minds and then we become victims of death Only the Real can can give us amrta Hence a little later the same text explains how we can attain this immortality

Before leaving for the forest to spend his last days there the sage Yājñavalkya wants to divide his property between his two wives One of them puts him this question Will your wealth bring me *amrta*?" He explains to her that wealth in no way can bring her *amrta* For that the *ātman* must be seen (*drastavya*) heard (*srotavya*) reflected upon (*mantavya*) and repeatedly meditated upon (*nididhyasitavya*) Four steps *darsana* *sravana* *manana* and *nididhyāsana* lead to *amrta* (BU 2 4 5) There comes a moment in our life-journey when nature s revelatory power is

---

For some time now it has been a fashion to quote Ireneus "The glory of God is man fully alive" But the whole sentence reads "The glory of God is man fully alive, and the life of man is the vision of God" *Adversus Haereses* 4 20 7

[2] Besides the usual abbreviations for the books of the Bible the following are also used in this study

BU	*Brhadaranyaka upanisad* (For the Upanishads I am following the text as in V P LIMAYE & R D VADEKAR (eds) *Eighteen Principal Upanisads* Poona Vaidika Samsodhana Mandala 1958),
BhG	*Bhagavad-Gitā* (cr ed as in *Mahābhārata* Poona Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute 1933-71)
ChU	*Chāndogya upanisad*
KU	*Katha-upanisad*
MU	*Mundaka upanisad*
SU	*Svetāsvatara upanisad*
VJTR	*Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection*

inadequate, when the symbols we have discovered cease to speak to us, when even an experienced guide must step aside and stand in silence. Then only the *ātman* can provide us the light we need (BU 4,3,1-6). Hence the *ātman* must be the 'object' of our life-long contemplation, attentive listening, critical reflection, and interiorising meditation.

Before we explain what constitutes these four steps, we need to understand what *ātman* means. This word is derived from the root *an* (to breathe), and comes to mean not only breath, but also the body or some of its parts.[4] But already in the *Ṛg-veda* we have "the incipient use of *ātman* soul in a reflexive sense."[5] Thus the Upanishads are insisting on the centrality of self-knowledge (*ātma-darsana*). Will not such an approach lead to some kind of solipsism and reinforce the dehumanizing individualism that seems to be one of the symptoms of our sick society? No, if we keep in mind what comes to be one of the major insights of the Upanishads· *ātman* is *brahman* (BU 2.5.19; 4.4.5, ChU 5.11.1; 8 14.1). The word *brahman* is derived from the root *brh* (to make or become big), and so we should not be surprised that the substantive is used both in the masculine and in the neuter, with over twenty different meanings.[6] Further, like many other ancient languages, Sanskrit has no capital letters. This ambiguity is a challenge and also a blessing. We can read the text in our context, and thus find its meaning for our time. The statement "*ātman* is *brahman*" can be read in four different ways.

1) Ātman is Brahman. The deepest Reality within me and the inner Self of all creation is God, the supremely Great One. God's creative act is not like that of a carpenter, a passing act with the carpenter remaining outside his production. The carpenter may forget what he has made, he himself may even die, but the product continues to be, because the causal activity of the carpenter explains only the shape of the product, but not its existence. God is the existence of all existents ("*satyasya satyam*" BU 2.1.20) The divine act is constitutive of the being of all things. God is our deepest within. His presence to me is

[4] SURYAKANTA, *A Practical Vedic Dictionary*, Delhi Oxford University Press, 1981, 133 V.S. APTE, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, eds. P K. GODE and C G KARVE, Poona Prasad Prakashan, rev. ed., 1957, 323

[5] A.A. MACDONELL, *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, Bombay: Oxford University Press, rep. 1966, 112.

[6] SURYAKANTA, 493. APTE, 1173

more vital than that of my breath. He is the breath of my breath (ChU 4.10.4-5). If God were not deeply within me, constantly remembering me, I would just cease to exist. The whole creation, including me and all that I am, is like a mirage that exists in the eyes of the beholder, that too only as long as he keeps on looking in the same direction. No wonder, the divine Beholder has three eyes.[7]

2) Ātman is *brahman*. The Self is this great world. A living organism is believed to have an animating principle that not only explains the fact that it is alive, but also the wonderful coordination we see between its different parts and activities. That animating principle is embodied in that organism and we conclude to its existence precisely by observing that organism. In like manner, if God is the deepest interiority of all creation, then this big creation 'embodies' Him, reveals Him. My body is myself and I am my body (and much more). If you touch my body you touch me. My body is the sacrament of my person.[8] By coming in contact with His creation we come in contact with God. The whole of creation is the sacrament of the Creator. Theology and cosmology are inseparable.

3) *Ātman* is Brahman My self is God. As we are made to God's image and likeness, we are a mirror of the divine mystery. If there is a certain oneness or non-duality (*a-dvaita*) between God and his creation, then this is particularly so between God and human beings.[9] The spirit within us is a spark from the divine fire. Hence by deeply understanding our self we can understand God My self is the primary shrine of God for He dwells within the cave in my heart (SU 3 20; KU 1.14; 2 20) The reverse is also true: the more I understand God the more will I understand my self Theology and anthropology are inseparable.

4) *Ātman* is *brahman* My self is this great world. The human person was created from the stuff of this creation (Gen 2:7). There is thus an *advaita* also between us and the rest of creation By understanding this creation, and by respecting it, we understand and respect our self The reverse is also true: the

[7]The *Mahābhārata* tell us that once Pārvati playfully tried to close the eyes of Siva As a result the whole creation began to crumble Siva comes to the rescue by mercifully opening his third eye (cr ed , 13 127 43-44)

[8]S. Anand, "Human Sexuality Some Theological Reflections," *VJTR*, 47 (1983), 78-80.

[9]S. Anand, "Advaita or Agape An Ancient Holistic Vision for Modern Fragmented Man", *VJTR*, 50 (1986), 7-30

more we really understand and respect our self, the more will we understand and respect the rest of creation. Cosmology and anthropology are inseparable. Just as I am part of the material creation, so too I am a fragment of humanity not only in its present diversity but also of its historical continuity. I am the offspring not only of my parents but also of my society. It is not possible for me to understand myself fully without understanding my society The reverse is also true. I cannot write my biography without studying the history of my people.

The human self (*ātman*) is thus the mediating point, the bridge (*setu*) between God and the rest of His creation (ChU 8.4.1). In relation to the rest of creation (*brahman*) and society at large I am called to become its *ātman*, a centre of consciousness and, therefore, of meaning and direction. We will succeed in this task to the extent we ourselves are moving towards Brahman, more and more experiencing Him as our ātman, our deepest reality The Upanishadic teaching that *ātman* is *brahman* is affirming the pontifical role of the human person: the role of being a bridge between God and His creation, between Brahman and *brahman* [10] Human existence is a sacramental mystery, because the incarnate person encapsulates and embodies the whole of Reality – Creator and creation, symbolizing It by his very being and constantly realizing It by his becoming.

We can now put together the four meanings of the great Upanishadic insight by saying that the quest for life is the quest for Brahman/*brahman*. Authentic living is a Brahma/*brahmacarya*, a walking towards (*carya*) the Great, the Total Reality, the all-comprehending Truth, which being understood all else becomes understood, as Yājñavalkya told his wife (BU 2.4.5). We can live only by living in and for the Reality that transcends us, for only then will we keep on growing, becoming bigger than what we are, reaching out to what we can be. The struggle to experience the Self deeply becomes a sacred journey (*tirtha-yātrā*),[11] and we become a truly pilgrim people.[12] That is the only way of being fully human, for the very essence of being human is being open to transcendence.

---

[10]The Latin *pontifex* is derived from *pons* (bridge) and *facere* (to make). It is very significant that in the Jaina tradition the founding fathers are called *tirthamkara*, bridge-builders

[11]S ANAND, "The Hindu Temple Its Significance Today," *Jeevadhara*, 23 (1993), 106-107

[12]S. ANAND, "The Inculturation of the Eucharistic Liturgy," VJTR, 57 (1993),

II

A. Darsana: Spirituality as a Vision for Reality-seekers

The pious Hindu goes to a temple for a *darsana*, but he does this only after adequate preparation, including some kind of a purification rite. Like other Sanskrit words, '*darsana*' too has many meanings. It implies a certain activity on our part, a reaching out to. It implies a desire to see Truth (*sat*) as it is, and a willingness to dispose ourselves for this experience. It is not always easy for us as individuals and as a community to be open to Truth, because the encounter with Truth can be very painful. There are times when we try to avoid or even bury the Truth The history of the Church is a sad witness to this temptation.[13] Whenever this happened "theologians and philosophers were a dangerous luxury, biblical scholars a tendentious nuisance"[14] Yet Truth alone conquers (MU 3 1 6), and only Truth can make us free (Jn 8.32) We can see the Truth only if, like true pilgrims, we are detached from our present position, if we have *vairāgya* This is why Gandhiji insisted that detachment was an essential condition for *satya-āgraha*, for the faithful pursuit of the Truth[15]

[13] This is true not only of past centuries when narrow religious thinking tended to be the rule but also of our times For instance a study by the Pontifical Biblical Commission "in the 1970s that found no biblical reasons for excluding women from the priesthood was not approved nor made public by the Vatican" *The Examiner* (Bombay), 145/15 (April 9, 1994), 21 More recently, I was present for the national consultation on "Mission in India Today" held at Ishavani Kendra, Pune, Janaury 4 - 9, 1994 The staff of Ishavani Kendra had conducted surveys in different parts of the country as a preparation for this consultation In the morning session of the first day some of the participants, including some of the bishops who were present, suggested that the findings of the surveys be incorporated in the statement that was to emerge from this consultation (see note 31 below) These findings were presented to the house in the evening and then there was a storm Some of those who earlier in the day asked for these findings now very strongly objected to their being incorporated in the statement to come The findings were not at all as per their expectations!

[14] M West, *Lazarus*, New York St Martin's Paperback, 1991, 57 In the Gospel of John, the high priest unknowingly makes a prophecy (11 51), a prophecy that is fulfilled very soon How I wish this were true of this novel of West His earlier novel, *The Clowns of God* (New York Bantam Books, 1981), is about Jean Marie Barette, who became pope, and took the name of Gregory XVII He is forced to abdicate because he claimed to have had a vision of the Lord, who has commanded him to proclaim some message, a message which the Cardinals found to be too unsettling I found both these novels a source of great hope

[15] V B Kher, ed , *In Search of the Supreme*, 3 vols Ahmedabad Navajivan Pb. House, 1962, I, 12, 123, II, 11

The visit to the temple is for a *darsana* of God, the fullness of Truth.[16] This is a call to contemplative prayer. This is the first meaning of *brahma-carya*: the desire to come close to God so as to see Him. This is the vocation of every human person.[17] But this contemplative prayer is also a gift of the Lord. The devotee going to the temple for *darsana* of God also hopes that God will graciously look at him, that God will give him a *darsana*. He is like a young man who has just spied a lovely maiden in a crowded marriage party and is desperately trying to draw her attention, to be graced by her *darsana*.[18] To see God as He is, we need a new vision, divine sight (BhG 11.8), a new *darsana*. This is the experience of grace, for God can be seen only by those whom He chooses and to whom He reveals His body (*tanu*, KU 2.23; MU 3 2.3).[19] This being enabled by God to see saves me from a subjective and distorted perception of reality, and thus serves as an effective antidote to the individualistic relativism so rampant today.

As a result of his contemplation (*darsana*) and God's grace-filled glance (*darsana*), the devotee acquires a new vision. That is the third meaning of *darsana*, a way of looking at life in its totality, seeing it as God sees it. Like Arjuna (BhG 4.9-14), the devotee undergoes a catharsis and begins to see God in all creation and all creation in God. As a consequence spirituality becomes first and foremost a vision, a way of looking at life with all its aspects, and the acts of piety and self-discipline become meaningful only if they are an expression of this vision. The contemplative experience of God becomes both the source and the guiding principle of our life and all our activity. The devotee who shares in God's vision becomes *sama-darsin*: he sees all creation in himself (*ātman*) and himself in all things (BhG 6.29). He avoids all kinds of discriminatory attitudes, making no distinction between a dog-eating outcast and a highly learned Brahmin (BhG 5.18). This is very significant for us, because one of the factors that undermines the credibility of the Christian community is precisely the caste mentality which is so strong not only in 'ordinary'

[16] ANAND, *The Hindu Temple Its Significance Today*, 111-14.

[17] S ANAND, "The Universal Call to Contemplation," *VJTR* 41(1977), 414-18

[18] Pārvati is eager to get Siva as her spouse but he, immersed in his own bliss, sits with his eyes closed When he does open his eyes and take note of her, she experiences his grace (*Siva-purāna, Rudra-samhitā, Pārvati-khanda*, 17-19).

[19] It seems to me that the use of the word *tanu* (body) is evocative of the graceful gesture of the young bride who unveils herself for her bridegroom.

Christians, but also – and often more vehemently – in religious, priests and even members of the hierarchy. The blood that we inherited from our caste-bound ancestors is definitely thicker than the water of baptism we received from the Church!

This approach to spirituality as a way of looking at life is important if the different concerns – and the many activities expressing them – not only of the believing individual but also of the community are to be properly integrated. Just as an individual becomes integrated if he has a focus for all that he does, so too the community needs a focus. Our pastoral action, evangelization, liberation, dialogue, theologizing, etc., ought to be inter-related. Otherwise we will be pulling in different directions and adding to the already existing confusion

Though *darsana* is the basis of our response to Truth, it has become a rare commodity today Ours is a society shaped by the media, and highly qualified publicity experts tell us how to think and how to act We are being constantly manipulated by the media. Even among supposedly critical people there is a growing TV addiction. As a consequence of our *dūra-darsana* (tele-vision) we are getting *dur-darsana* (bad vision). While the TV, just like all the other media, can be very educative, yet if it is not handled critically it can distance (tele-) us from the Truth When this happens confusion sets it Some time back I heard the staff-member of a supposedly enlightened faculty remark with not a little frustration· "The only time we all look in the same direction is when we are before the TV!" The TV-viewers tend to become passive. You cannot put a question to the TV nor do most of the programmes put questions to you The image is more powerful than a concept, and it affects us even without our thinking, and thus gradually pushes thinking out. This explains why our bookstalls and even some of our seminaries and religious houses are flooded with so many tabloids A capacity to handle the media in a mature manner is, thus, a very essential part of the type of spirituality we need today.

B. *Sravana*: A Vision Shaped by Reality

The *ātman* must be heard. We have already noted that '*ātman*' stands for the body or the parts of the body Hence to listen to the *ātman* is first and foremost to listen to our body, because that is how I exist in this world, and that is how you experience my existence and can relate to me Our ancestors listened to the

gentle whisper of their body. Hence they recommended that we follow certain rules about food, drink and sleep. They realised that, since we are not pure spirits, a certain rhythm of living helps us to become more free. They developed a whole system of discipline whereby the body and the spirit could work together (*yoga*). Today we have over-cerebralized our approach to life. We naively believe that we are really able to do what we think we can do. No doubt, we can become scrupulous about rules of diet and slaves of our time-tables. But the other extreme is equally harmful.

Today we know from behavioural sciences that a large part of our conscious behaviour originates and is guided by subconscious factors So often our feeling of being free is only an illusion, the result of our ignorance (*avidyā*). So often our loud profession "I love you" is only a subtle plea "I need your love." Our hearts can and do cheat us. Only the Lord can fully understand them (Jer 17:9-10). The silence of contemplation brings us face to face with our inner self. It enables us to listen to the cries of our heart. We not only see our deep rooted inborn and acquired needs, but have the humility to honestly accept them. The more we realise their existence and the powerful hold they have on us the more will we see how much our behaviour is shaped, not by freedom or by conscious choice, but by our self-asserting, self-preserving, and self-defending needs. We are even tempted to rationalize this aspect of our life. Only the experience of a greater Love, a Love that surpasses all our understanding, can take us beyond our little egos

Once a little boy, Satyakāma, went to a learned teacher for instruction The teacher gracefully received the eager lad and sent him to graze his cattle While he was doing this, he was instructed by a bull, the fire, a swan and a diver-bird, and as a result he became resplendent as a *brahma-vid*, a Brahma-knower Even then he comes back to his teacher, well aware that only a person who has himself experienced Brahman can complete the instruction he has received from nature (ChU 4.4-9) The *ātman* is the *brahman*. Just as my body is my self, so too in a very deep sense my environment is my self. I am constantly affected by it physically, emotionally and spiritually. If I live in a place where the air is still pure, where there are still green trees, where we can still walk with our heads turned upwards and our eyes fixed on the sky without being worried that we may step on

somebody else's dirt, then not only will we be healthy in body, but will also feel joyful and experience the presence of transcendence in nature. Then *brahman* becomes Ātman, then nature becomes the presence of God, creation becomes a sacrament of the Creator. The person desirous to obtain the Truth (*satya-kāma*) must listen to nature. Only then will he or she really appreciate the wisdom that can be can acquired from a human spiritual guide.[20] Due to the process of modernization and urbanization we are gradually losing this receptive closeness to nature As a result our life is becoming more and more artificial, full of novelties but lacking in real creativity and depth

Just as nature is *brahman*, so is also the religious community to which I belong and the society in which I live. Both have their past history and present reality In order to listen to my self fully, I need to listen to the history that has shaped me. Contemporary youth, with its 'practical' quest, is impatient with history. I need to listen to the social reality to which I belong Ours is a profoundly pluralistic society Not only different ethnic families but almost all the great religions of humanity have found a home in our land These religions have been, and continue to be, the concrete expressions of God's salvific design for millions of God's sons and daughters for thousands of years They have profound religious insights I need to listen to this wisdom Our country is also marked with great poverty This also ought to have some message for me

C. *Manana* : A Critical Vision of Reality

When an individual or a community follows its tradition without constantly subjecting it to a critical scrutiny, then fundamentalism and superstition begin to replace healthy belief. Then religion becomes disruptive of human life and values, and instead of bringing people together it generates different kinds of violence, as is happening in so many parts of the world even today. Further, as a result of scientific progress, traditional thought-patterns have come in for severe criticism Without integrating the positive elements in this criticism, religion will

[20]In contrast to this receptiveness of Satyakāma is the disturbing phenomenon we find in our seminaries and houses of religious formation a reluctance to seek guidance from experienced elders The people in formation have the "I know what is good for me" attitude When they are confronted by their superiors, their stock answer is "You do not understand me" which in many cases means "You do not accept what I say."

become irrelevant and serve merely as a therapeutic alternative for peoples who are deeply disturbed by the uncertainties of modern living.

It is *manana* that enables us to make a personal synthesis of the many insights we have today not only from behavioural sciences, but also from the study of other religious traditions. Through *manana* we continue to be pilgrims, in search of the fullness of that Truth which will always remain more than what we have comprehended. From a deeper study of the process of knowing and understanding we have become aware that our knowledge is determined by many factors. As these factors undergo change our knowledge and way of looking at life too is affected. This may mean that some elements that were once considered vital for human growth may not seem that important today.

Personal discernment is one form of *manana*. What is the Lord asking me here and now? What is life telling me here and now? What are my values today? Why do I hold on to them? Are they all equally important? I would consider this capacity for personal discernment as one of the most essential marks of a mature disciple of Jesus. Our Christian life is to be nurtured by the reading of the Scriptures, but we can no longer maintain a naive attitude towards the Bible. Modern scholarship makes us much more careful about drawing conclusions from the texts as we have them. Similarly I must make a theological reflection: What do I really mean by faith in God? What are my beliefs? Do I have adequate reasons to hold on to these beliefs? Are all these beliefs equally important? In like manner I must examine my own tradition and retain what is really fundamental and meaningful to us today. An honest study of the history of the Church and of ecclesiastical pronouncments will make me more alert, and I will not easily confuse tradition with Tradition.

This discerning attitude both towards sacred Scripture and ecclesiastical tradition has been advocated by Vatican II. The Council wholeheartedly endorses the modern critical methods of Biblical exegesis [21] If there were incomplete and temporary elements in the books of the Old Testament,[22] we have no reason to exclude such elements from the New Testament. Let me cite just one case. The leaders gathered for the Council of Jerusalem inform the Christians of Antioch that it seemed good to them

[21] *Dei Verbum*, 12

[22] *Ibid*, 15

and to the Holy Spirit that they ought to abstain from eating the meat of a strangled animal (Acts 15:28). Yet I do not think any serious scholar will maintain that this ruling continues to bind us even today. In like manner there are many other elements within the New Testament and subsequent ecclesiastical teaching which served a purpose for their time This can also be true for pronouncements made with an appeal to the Holy Spirit, as the Jerusalem Council did. The Council also reminds the theologians that there is a certain hierarchy of truths,[23] and that the Church needs to move towards the fullness of the divine truth.[24]

D. *Nididhyāsana*: Responding to Reality

If *darsana* is to be followed by *sravana, manana, nididhyāsana*, if our vision of life is to be the fruit of attentive openness to Reality, critical examination of our sources, and authentic interiorisation, then we need a lot of leisure and silence, and both these are not easily available. Today the cost of living has gone up, and so we need more money Hence we have no time, sometimes not even for our nearest ones. But if we honestly reflect, then we will have to admit that many of the items on which we spend our hard-earned money and our precious time are not really needed In a world where communication media seem to rule supreme, information has become a consumer item So much so that even for many priests and religious the morning news has become more important than their morning meditation We spend a lot of time collecting data – data which does not really affect us or to which we respond effectively Therefore if we do not have much leisure then we are largely responsible for it. If we are really earnest, we can make time for ourselves. The mature person is able to examine his way of life and put disturbing questions to himself The capacity to make a judicious use of time is another important feature of contemporary spirituality.

Silence is another element which is vital for *darsana*. By silence I mean first of all a milieu free from noise-pollution Noise makes us not only deaf but also tense A tense person tends to be closed to Reality It is true that modern cities tend to be noisy. But once again we cannot get away by blaming others. I myself have been to homes – even seminaries and houses of religious formation – that have pop songs played through a stereo-set sometimes on a deafening note. You may not believe it, but I have found seminarians with ear-phones

[23] *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 11
[24] *Dei Verbum*, 8

plugged into their ears listening to light music or to some live cricket commentary while their eyes are on their theology [illegible]. Some people believe that silence is inhuman, and that if you are alive you must prove it by shouting! But this outer silence will not avail us much if our minds continue to be in the [illegible] place. The early spiritual guides spoke about the much misunderstood and often much maligned custody of the eyes, or the control of one's senses, of *indriya-pratyāhāra*. We need to rediscover the importance of this ancient wisdom. We just cannot expose ourselves to all kinds of images and then expect our imagination to sit quiet. This becomes all the more important today because we live in a very liberal and permissive society, with the media providing us so many different entertainment programmes, and because our media barons know that 'hot things sell.'

Repeated meditation (*nididhyāsana*) involves the mind and the heart because Truth can be known only by the heart (BU 2.9.23) Repeated meditation leads to attachment to Reality and the desire to be shaped by its demands. Just as a religious tradition that is not subjected to a constant critique can degenerate into dehumanizing superstition, so too if it does not shape life it becomes a sterile ideology. To put it differently, there is a vital relation between our understanding of Truth and our effective response to It. Truth discloses Itself to us in proportion to our response. This explains why our seers said that *sraddhā* (faith) is essential to our understanding of Truth (BU 6.2.15; ChU 7.19.1; KU 1.13).[25] We begin with the little we know. We begin by believing that there is Truth even though we have not yet understood It. But as we live by what we already have we have an experience (*anu-bhava*) of the fullness of the Truth. We can have an experience of the Truth only by making our existence (*bhava*) in accordance with (*anu*) It.[26] As Gandhiji insists, "Truth

[25]It is very significant that it is only after *sraddh* enters him that little Naciketas puts a question to his father (KU 1 1), as a result of which we have one of the most beatiful Upanisadic texts

[26]We can understand 'true' at least in four different ways. It is true that two plus two is four, that a triangle has three sides This is purely a mental truth, unrelated to reality outside my mind. Second, it is true that you are reading this article This is a fact even if I do not take a note of it, but when I do, my mind affirms something that is taking place outside it. Third, you believe that I myself wrote this article You accept my claim to be true Last, you think – I hope you do – that this is truly a good article, i.e., this article is what you expect a good article to be You are making a statement about its quality, about what it is. Thus there are four kinds of truths definitional, epistemological, moral and existential. That the last is the most appropriate translation of '*satya*' becomes clear from the fact that this word is derived from the root [illegible] (to be) via the participle *sat* (existent). APTE, 1614. Hence a thing or a person is *satya* when that thing or person "is truly and completely that which the substantive (to which it belongs) expressed." J. GONDA, "The Historical Background of the Name Satya Assigned to the Highest Being", *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 48-49 (1968), 86. Thus to be true is to be real. Truth is Reality.

has to be lived if it is to fructify."[27] If we are truly guided by darsana, a way of looking at life shaped by a contemplative experience of God, then we will realize the primacy of *satya* (truth-embodying existence).

We have already spoken about the distortion of our vision (*mithya-darsana*) due to the impact of the modern media. As a result of this thinking, action becomes more important than presence and we tend to give primacy to information and knowledge, to performance and production, to equipment and well organized institutions, to flashy buildings and glamourous media. Then what becomes important is not my inner reality but the outer appearance, not what I am but what I can do and possess, not the practice of Christ-like love and compassion but the frequenting of sacraments, novenas, pilgrimages, not what I say but how I say it. The medium itself becomes the message. Competence, effective action and quick results become more important than commitment, authentic presence and honest effort. Quantity gets greater importance than quality.

An authentic experience of God will give us the realisation that that the quality of our life is more important than our professional competence, that what we are is more important than what we have or what we can do. The disciple of Jesus needs information, competence, and effective media But there is the temptation to use them as a cover for our lack of wisdom, commitment and authentic presence. Our understanding of *satya* as truth-embodying existence will affect all areas of Christian life. Our proclamation will consist not in a verbal communication of some formulae, but the embodying of the mystery of Jesus in our life. Our liturgy will be effective primarily not because we have good readers, plenty of singing, gaudy vestments, modern symbols, etc , but because the people involved in this liturgy are consistently trying to embody the mystery they claim to celebrate Our theology will once again become a struggle to share with others our contemplation (*contemplata aliis tradere*), to understand not merely some texts – however ancient or sacred they may be – and relate them to our situation, but above all our living and life-shaping faith (*fides quaerens intellectum*). When this happens the disciples of Jesus become a sign of contradiction. Then they are a silent but powerful prophetic critique of the modern cult of false gods: competitive careerism and individual success. There is ample evidence that this cult is quite prevalent in the Church.

[27]Kher, II, 18

When *satya* becomes primary, then our life is characterised by *ahimsā*.[28] The person in search of truth does not resort to any kind of fraud, intimidation or manipulation. All these are forms of *himsā* (violence), and very much part of our modern life, so powerfully shaped by advertisements and other forms of half-truths. Real *satya* has its own attraction, appealing to what is deeply human in each one of us If it does not have this attraction, then either it is not the real truth, and so we can abandon it, or, it has not been effectively witnessed unto and then we need conversion Truth can be effectively proclaimed only by being witnessed unto

The primacy of *satya*, the realization that what I am is more important than what I have, will make the missionary deeply detached from worldly possessions and values. The commitment to evangelical poverty will then mean not merely a detachment from wealth and material goods but also detachment from worldly concerns like success, prestige, status, popularity, etc. In our tradition the spiritual person is characterised by *vairāgya*. He has experienced Ātman (BU 3.5.1), and hence see all these in relation to this mystery (BU 2.4.5). This inner simplicity is reflected in his outward behaviour, his conversation, his life-style. Second, our mission as disciples of Jesus is to be exercised in the contemporary context. Today we are surrounded by a powerful culture of dehumanizing consumerism, and this poses a greater threat to human survival than all nuclear weapons put together. For many people today personal commitment and moral values are secondary while money and all the pleasure and glamour money can bring have become primary.

The Kingdom of God is the greater reality (*brahman*), and it is concerned for the total happiness of all human persons, and not just of souls, for a healthy earth and not just a pious Church. Today human life is threatened by a polluted environment and an unjust society. Concern for ecological balance (*rta*) needs a spiritual backing: a life of prayer nurtured by the experience of God's presence in the beauty of nature. The struggle for justice (*dharma*) means a way of life that brings us closer to the poor, the marginalized, the weak and the vulnerable. It means that our life-style is not consumeristic, because it is this consumerism that eventually explains the social injustice we see today: a few

[28]Gandhiji says that for him truth is synonymous with non-violence, and so the former always includes the latter. KHER, II, 15.

people in power want to have the most and the best of this earth's bounty.[29] Without this struggle to share the lot of the marginalized all our learned talk about liberation and third-world theology is only some powerful opium, effectively anaesthetizing our conscience.

If our *darsana* calls us to work not just for the Church, but to be primarily at the service of the Kingdom, and if the Kingdom is greater than the Church, then the workers of this Kingdom are many more than the so-called Christians. Hence if we are serious about the Kingdom then we will gladly seek to cooperate not only with workers from within the Church – and this is not always the case – but also with all people of good will who in their own way are struggling to make God's Kingdom a little more real on this earth. This capacity for collaboration is also an essential part of contemporary spirituality. We will talk less and less of Christian schools, hospitals, social projects, and think more and more in terms of human undertakings If we need to be co-workers with all people of good will, then this is possible only if we are also co-pilgrims with them, sharing with them their search for God, reverentially bowing down before their spiritual teachers, humbly learning from their spiritual tradition, gratefully enriching our life with their inner experience, joining them not only in service but also in prayer.

Will not such an approach to spirituality confuse our identity? Will a movement that does not have a definite identity, an identity concretised in its own institutions, evoke a firm and lasting response? The question of identity can be approached in two ways. First, we can identify a community through its visible boundaries its rituals, set of beliefs, code of individual and social behaviour, etc The Church then becomes a sanctuary. A sanctuary has very clear boundaries. The many "Christian" colonies that we find in different parts of India are the result of

[29]The *Bhagavad-Gītā* in which Krishna, who is presented as the protector of *dharma*, urges Arjuna to fight, is part of the *Mahābhārata* The great epic describes the fight between the Pāndavas and the Kauravas, both children of a common ancestor, because the latter have grabbed the ancestral kingdom all for themselves. This same text narrates two very disturbing events· the effort of the Kauravas to strip Draupadi naked, and the total destruction of a forest and all its inhabitants by Krishna and Arjuna A consumer society uses everything, even humans, as means of entertainment, and it is very eco-violent A community which does not hesitate to pollute the earth will also violate woman and her dignity. See also S ANAND, "Khāndavadāha A Meditation in Ecology," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 71 (1990), 25-59.

this sanctuary mentality.[30] However a community can identified in relation to its inner life-principle, the source of inspiration, its way of looking at and commitment to life. The identity of the disciples of Jesus will be revealed by their darsana, by their contemplative life and by the vision of life which is the fruit of this contemplation. As Karl Rahner said, "The Christian of the future will be a mystic, or he or she will not exist at all."[31]

III

Guru-anukarana: Jesus as the Embodiment of Reality

An ancient text of our land, after giving us a profound discourse on spirituality, says that its teaching has been disclosed to one who has the highest devotion (*bhakti*) towards God and in the same measure towards his teacher (*yathā deve tathā gurau*: SU 6.22). This may surprise many moderns, who tend to be very allergic to authority figures, and not without some good reasons But all the major spiritual traditions of this land have insisted on the indispensability of a qualified guide for any person seriously desiring to grow into the fullness of human life. Granting that a highly experienced guide can be very helpful, granting that we ought to revere such a person, the question remains: Can we really and meaningfully have devotion towards a teacher in the same measure that we have towards God? The Christian tradition gives an answer in the affirmative to this question, because it believes that Jesus, who is our *guru*, is also our God.

Today, apparently due to the demands of dialogue with peoples of other faiths, this tradition is being questioned.[32] There are some theologians who say that Jesus himself was concerned about the Kingdom of God. Hence a Christocentric emphasis contradicts the very mind of Jesus. We need a Theocentric paradigm Others go further. the doctrine of the incarnation is mythical. What the New Testament wants to convey is not that

[30] K.N SAHAY, *Christianity and Culture Change in India*, New Delhi: Inter-India Pbs., 1986, 114; R.B. SHARMA, *Christian Missions in North India 1813-1913: A case study of Meerut Division and Dhera Dun District*, Delhi: Mittal Pubs., 1988, 198; D. SWARO, *The Christian Missionaries in Orissa: Their Impact on Nineteenth Century Society*, Calcutta, Punthi Pustak, 1990, 214

[31] Quoted by *Paths of Mission in India Today: Statement of the National Consultation on Mission, 4-9 January, 1994*, Pune: Ishvani Kendra, 1994, no. 27.

[32] J. HICK (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate*, London: SCM, 1977, ix.

Jesus is God, but that in and through him we experience God very intimately.[33] Hence they propose a new hermeneutics of the New Testament.

Two observations are in place in this context. First, any fresh hermeneutics must respect the semantic axis of the text or of the tradition it seeks to interpret afresh. Now the books of the New Testament "aim first of all at proclaiming and strengthening faith in Jesus as the Son of God, Lord and Messiah,"[34] and the faith in the divinity of Jesus "has been taken during the bulk of Christian history to constitute the very heart of Christianity."[35] Second, I think that we are being theologically naive when we say that because Jesus was concerned about the Kingdom of God we must shift from Christocentricism to Theocentricism because

> what is permanently striking in the New Testament.. is the essential relationship between the person of Jesus and his message of the immanence of what Jesus calls the kingdom of God There is an intrinsic connection between the message and proclaimer, just as there is an intrinsic connection between the message and Jesus' activity in consistency with it.[36]

The New Testament is Christocentric by being Theocentric, and it is Theocentric by being Christocentric. The God of the New Testament is the Abba of Jesus, and the Christian is called to have the mind and heart of this Jesus As Jesus embodies his vision in his life and activity, we need to reflect on his life, and imitate his example, and we can do this only by living in him, as a branch does in a vine (Jn 15:5).

Contemporary thinkers draw our attention to what they like to call the secular character of Jesus and his vision He is not a recluse, nor is he like John the Baptist He moves about in the midst of people, sharing their life, attending their parties, eating and drinking with them, so much so that some even said that he was a glutton (Mt 11:19) He was not pressurized by what people thought nor cowed down by persons in authority (Lk 13:32). He refused to allow narrow religious tradition or arrogant

---

[33] J. HICK & P F KNITTER (eds), *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, Maryknoll (NY) Orbis Bks, 1987, 31

[34] J.P. MEIER, *A Marginal Jew Rethinking Historical Jesus*, New York. Doubleday, 1991, 41

[35] B. HEBBLETHWAITE, *The Incarnation Collected Essays in Christology*, Cambridge: Camb. Uni. Press, (1987) rep 1988, 1

[36] E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *The Church with a Human Face· A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry*, London. SCM Press, 1985, 28

temple leaders to curtail his freedom, even declaring himself the Lord of the Sabbath (Mt 12:8). He used his own personal and very critical mind. In the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, Jesus says: "You have been told..." and then quotes the Old Testament and adds "but I say to you..." (Mt 5:21-28). This kind of critical approach is imperative for the Church if she is to be a prophetic sign of the Kingdom to come, and not be reduced to a [illegible] of ages long past.

Jesus uses the language of the ordinary people, in fact the language of a country-side peasant. He does not demand any specifically 'religious' acts from those who want to be his disciples. To belong to the Kingdom of his Father, it is enough to be concerned for other human beings who need our love and care (Mt 25:34-36). For him the human person is the primary temple of his Father, love of the neighbour is the fundamental law, and service of the needy the foundation of all worship (Lk 10:30-37).[37] It was this radical rejection of the Temple of Jerusalem and the type of religion that it embodied that led Jesus to the cross (Jn 2:19; Mt 26:55.61; 27:40.51). How did Jesus come to this way of looking at life, this *darsana*?

The whole life of Jesus and all that he was and did was rooted in deep prayer, in his 'Abba-experience.' In his Gospel Luke gives us the best account of the development of the consciousness of Jesus about himself and his mission. While he was in prayer at his baptism he experiences himself as the son of God called to be the servant of Yahweh, and he is filled with the Holy Spirit (3:21-22).[38] After this foundational experience Jesus would spend long hours all by himself in a lonely place, communing with his heavenly Father. This deep prayer-experience makes him see that his mission is not confined to his native Galilee (4:42-44). It enables him to choose his missionary co-workers (6:12-16). It opens his eyes to the bitter opposition he evokes and its possible consequences (9:18-22). It also gives him the assurance that he will not fail (9:28-36). On the eve of his death, it was deep prayer that gave him the courage he needed (22:41-44).

[37] The priest and the levite ignored the wounded traveller because they were on their way to the temple. Contact with a corpse or even blood would make them ritually impure, and debar them from the temple liturgy. The Samaritan could not participate in that worship because he was ritually impure by his very birth.

[38] It is clear that in composing this account the evangelist had Is 42 in mind.

[illegible] was to preach and to heal, to proclaim the [illegible] make it already a reality. Even though the people [illegible] flocked to him precisely for this, yet he constantly [illegible] point to send them home, so that he could be alone with his Father (5:15-16). Jesus knew that it was this silence that [illegible] his word powerful and his presence healing. In fact this contemplative aspect of Jesus is one of the best attested features of his life. It was precisely because Jesus had experienced God as Love, as a gentle Abba, that with love and compassion he reached out to all people, but specially to the poor, the outcasts and the oppressed of his times. Having experienced Love, he himself loved us unto the end (Jn 13:1). By his word and deed, by healing the sick and by his other miracles, Jesus tried to heal the society of his times, to restore nature to its primal purity. In his own way he worked for *rta* and *dharma*, for ecological harmony and social justice, because both these are essential aspects of the Kingdom of his Father. In all this Jesus was totally shaped by his *darsana* of the Father. The disciples, who knew him intimately, realised that this was the secret of his life and, hence, requested him to teach them to pray (Lk 11:1).[39]

It is not easy to understand and accept this secular vision of Jesus. It is not easy to believe that 'religionless Christianity' is what Jesus really wanted. Hence the history of the Church documents the efforts of successive generations of Christians to institutionalize and cultify the vision of Jesus. Thus gradually the code of canon law comes to replace the New Testament, buildings become more important than communities, ritual becomes more important than love, man-made rites become more important than God-given rights, dogmatic consistency becomes more important than bridal fidelity, the hierarchy becomes more important than the people of God,[40] sacramentalization becomes

[39]This is the only request the disciples make for themselves. James and John do ask Jesus the privilege of sitting one on his right and the other on his left (Mk 10:37), but in this they seem to be pushed by a mother anxious about the future of her sons (Mt 20:21).

[40]The Vatican II Constitution *Lumen Gentium* has a very revealing history. The second draft presented in 1963 had four chapters.

1. The mystery of the Church,
2. The hierarchical constitution of the Church and the episcopate in particular,
3. The people of God and the laity in particular,
4. The call to holiness in the Church.

From suggestions received the Coordinating Commission inserted a new chapter dealing with the people of God as such soon after chapter one. See H. Vorgrimler (ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, New York, Herder & Herder, 1967-69, I, 110. According to the great ecclesiologist, Y. Congar, this was a very "momentous" change ("The Church. The People of God," *Concilium*, 1 (1965), 7), as it reflects a theological shift. The people of God is more important than the hierarchy, and the latter has a place to the extent it effectively embodies the *diakonia* preached and practised by Jesus of Nazareth.

more important than Christianization, the Church to which we belong becomes more important than the Kingdom of God. This kind of Christianity is easy both for the clergy and the laity. It is also more lucrative, and in a world where results are more important than honest commitment it surely provides more visible evidence of being successful.

But there is another temptation. Some Christians today want to be more secular than Jesus! They want freedom without self-confronting silence and deep contemplation. They want to love without having to die to themselves. They want to celebrate the Eucharist without wanting to become the bread broken for others. They even seem to regret the fact that Jesus was not prudent enough, not diplomatic enough, and thus avoid the cross. The best articulation of this modern paganism is the powerful novel of Nikos Kazantzakis *The Last Temptation*.[41] This temptation would indeed be the last, for were the Christian community to succumb to it, there would be no disciples of Jesus left. Then the *darsana* of Jesus would also be lost, because this *darsana* can only be preserved and handed down not by some sacred book or solemn liturgy but by people who are struggling to live by it.

[41]English translation by P.A Bien, Oxford Bruno Cassirer, 1975

Continued from p. 760

Selly Oak Department of Missions stands for 'Mission Affirmation' but wants to "promote both a critical openness to a variety of possible views and practices and the belief that innovation only makes sense from a solid hold on the Gospel of Jesus Christ."While promoting discussion on controversial subject it stands for commitment to mission,for "the very notion of mission connotes conviction and vocation"(from the preface by Kirk, Dean and Head of the Department)."

In this booklet, the first of an Occasional Series,eight theologians associated with the College, all of them with mission experience mostly in Africa or America/the Caribeans,reflect on basic aspects of mission always rooted in a rich biblical theology. the missio ecclesiae,the relation of mission to discipleship,the so-often forgotten Holy Spirit's role in mission, mission and liberation, mission and the integrity of creation (by Sri Lankan theologian R.S. Surgirtharajah), mission and ideology, mission as 'presence'(by Norwegian Aasulv Lande, with inter-faith experience in Japan) and partnership in world mission.

This is a valuable and readable booklet which should be at the disposal of undergraduates wherever mission or missiology is taught. It should also help the Church at large to reflect on its mission commitments.

G.GISPERT-SAUCH, SJ.

Diocesan Spirituality

Archbishop Henry D'SOUZA

[illegible] talk given in Bombay to the Rectors and Spiritual Counsellors of Indian Major Seminaries in September 1994, the Archbishop of Calcutta takes up points mentioned in the *Pastoral Guide for Diocesan Priests* and establishes four central elements of union in the spirituality of the diocesan priest: with God, the bishop, fellow priests and the people He then reflects on what this would imply for the formation imparted in Seminaries.

Every year I give a course on diocesan spirituality to the Deacons or pre-deacons of Morning Star College I am usually asked: Is there a specific diocesan spirituality? It would appear that priestly spirituality should be common to all priests. The diocesan priest does not have any special charism as found in religious congregations. Hence there arises the question, whether there is such a thing as a diocesan spirituality.

I am convinced that there is a specific diocesan spirituality. Some decades ago, the image of a diocesan priest was static, and the circumstances of his ministry were also static and easily foreseen. The diocesan priest was an image of solidity and stability. In fact the parish priest was appointed for life and would remain in a parish for several decades. There were fixed patterns of his ministry and life. He dressed in a cassock. He walked around the compound of the church premises reciting his breviary and saying his rosary. He met people as a father-figure, exuding paternalism and benevolent charity. Such a life found good support from monastic forms of spirituality and prayer.

But this has changed drastically in the present day exercise of ministry. The priest is on the road. He is dressed as a lay person. His ritual and cultic role is played down and desacralized. The old solemnity of the liturgy does not seem so appealing any more. He is the man of the people. With this sort of intermingling in the world, can he retain his priestly identity? Can he continue to be the salt – or will he lose his savour?

In the Synod of 1991 on "The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day," a diocesan spirituality be-

gan to be highlighted and given its specific character. Chapter 5 of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* on "The spiritual life of the priest" has very many beautiful insights into the nature of priestly and diocesan spirituality. It will be good for seminaries and formators of diocesan priests to reflect deeply on the contents of that chapter and to see how the daily seminary curriculum and formation could foster the growth of a genuine and deep diocesan spirituality.

Already in 1989 the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples put out a booklet called *Pastoral Guide for Diocesan Priests in Churches Dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization for Peoples*. In the booklet the Congregation reflects in much depth on the special qualities required for the ministerial priesthood to be exercised in mission lands. There is a chapter on "The spirituality of the Diocesan Priest" which has very specific guidance for living out a diocesan spirituality. It is relevant to quote one paragraph which sums up the various dimensions of the priestly spirituality of a diocesan priest.

> The spirituality proper to the secular diocesan clergy is based mainly on the following points. a loving adherence to, and devoted following of Christ, who was sent by the Father and consecrated by the Spirit, with special devotion to the central mystery of the Eucharist and the exemplary presence of Mary, cordial and generous union with, and obedience to, the Roman Pontiff and the local bishop; close fraternity with the priests of the local 'presbyterium'; apostolic service to the faithful of the local Church and a willingness to help other churches that are in need and to evangelize non-Christians (p 53)

In this exposition I would like to take up some of these elements for reflection and discussion.

Union with Christ

Priestly spirituality is a configuration to Christ. The priest becomes the extension of Jesus in the world. He is the human expression of Christ in time and space. It is through him that Jesus speaks and ministers; Jesus will reach as far as the priest's feet will take him. Jesus is projected to the extent that the priest reflects his presence. The statements, "I live, no not I, but Christ lives in me" or "The priest is another Christ" are not just figures of speech. They are realities which take a life time of priestly living to be understood and appreciated.

Configuration with Christ means that the priest has to put

on the mind of Christ. His thinking, acting, etc., will radiate Christ. The priesthood is not only a status or a position of spiritual power: the life of a priest has to carry the pattern of thinking and acting proper to Jesus Christ, whose authority he shares.

A wonderful story is told about St Anthony of the Desert. Tradition says that three monks would go to visit Anthony every year. Two would speak, while one always remained silent. When Anthony questioned this monk about his silence, he received this answer: "It is enough to see you, Father." A lady once stopped and said to a priest: "It is so good to see you." The priest thanked her but added that he didn't believe that he had met her before. "Oh no, Father! I just meant it was good to see a priest." For most Christians the priest who ministers to them is the presence of Christ in their lives.

In becoming configurated to Christ, the priest shares in Christ's Headship of the Church, which is his Body. But his authority means service according to the example of Jesus,who being God emptied himself taking the form of a servant.

The priest is also a shepherd in the pattern of Jesus the Good Shepherd. In that capacity he feeds the sheep, feels compassion for them, goes in search of the lost one, leads the sheep to green pastures.

The Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* of His Holiness John Paul II states the following:

> In his spiritual life, therefore, he is called to live out Christ's spousal love towards the Church, his Bride Therefore, the priest's life ought to radiate this spousal character which demands that he be a witness to Christ's spousal love, and thus be capable of loving people with a heart which is new, generous and pure, with genuine self-detachment, with full, constant and faithful dedication and at the same time with a kind of "divine jealousy" (cf 2 *Cor* 11:2), and even with a kind of maternal tenderness, capable of bearing "the pangs of birth" until "Christ be formed" in the faithful (cf. *Gal* 4 19) (22)

Union with the Bishop

A diocesan priest will try to maintain a warm and trustful relationship with his local ordinary. This is also part of diocesan spirituality. He promises respect and obedience to the bishop. This means that in his priestly ministry he would have a disposition of doing not his own will but, like Jesus, the will of him in

whose mission he is (cf. Jn 4:34, 5:30, 6:38).

In the spiritual life of a priest obedience has some special characteristics. It is apostolic, in that the priest acknowledges the hierarchical structure of the Church The Supreme Pontiff and the Episcopal College are an integral part of his mental and theological attitude.

> This "submission" to those invested with ecclesial authority is in no way a kind of humiliation It flows instead from the responsible freedom of the priest who accepts not only the demands of an organized and organic ecclesial life, but also that grace of discernment and responsibility in ecclesial decisions which was assured by Jesus to his apostles and their successors, for the sake of faithfully safeguarding the mystery of the Church and serving the structure of the Christian community along its common path towards salvation (*PDV* no 28).

In today's context, bishops normally exercise their authority with an openness to dialogue and discussion Bishops are indeed blessed when the clergy relates to them as St Ignatius of Antioch desired, "attuned to their bishops like the strings of the harp, the result is an hymn of praise to Jesus Christ from minds that are in unison and hearts that are in harmony."

The apostolic character of obedience also demands respect for Church teaching and guidance from the Holy See. Papal documents should be accepted in a spirit of faith. While it is valid to discuss and discern them, it is not helpful when seminary professors take up attitudes of contestation and disrespect. It is more useful to indicate, if necessary, how the Asian or Indian situation brings in other dimensions of the problem. Such an attitude would assist the seminarian to theologize meaningfully It would also assist him to grow in freedom through authentic Christian obedience without servility The Pope's Exhortation mentions that priestly obedience is not of an "individual who alone relates to authority but rather an obedience which is deeply a part of the unity of the presbyterate, which as such is called to cooperate harmoniously with the Bishops and, through him, with Peter's successor" (*PDV* no. 28).

Such apostolic obedience demands a spirit of asceticism. It will mean setting aside of one's own preferences. It will also imply the co-responsibility of a priest regarding the directions and choices made by legitimate authority.

This aspect of the priestly obedience will have a bearing on the pastoral ministry. Its fruit will be a feeling of security in the

flock over which the priest is placed. It will keep the people of God safe from the vagaries of passing opinions and the insecurity of doctrinal ambiguities.

Union with Fellow Priests

We are well aware of the difficulties which priests face within the presbyterium. There is often the generation gap. There are also the differences of theological and pastoral perspectives. There are the human problems of men living together having different dietary tastes and emotional and intellectual needs. These facts are compounded by differences in character, temperament, talents and abilities.

Learning to live in community is an art. The necessity of priests being supportive of each other is not easily realized. There is a grave danger for the presbyteriums to develop a sort of crow culture which picks upon the mistakes and failures of brother priests (also of the bishop). Most of this criticism is part of the banter and fun of priestly companionship. But priests (bishops too) need to be affirmed. Support and encouragement have the effect of bringing joy and zest like the sunshine in which plants grow and smile.

The presbyterium should be a place of belonging. A priest who does not feel that he belongs to the presbyterium is in grave spiritual danger. Belonging implies many things: acceptance, caring, cooperation, a place of healing and growth and a host of other values. It means that the community respects the differences and peculiarities of each other. It is not plagued by jealousies over the achievements of companion priests. On the contrary it rejoices in the successes of each other and shares in the sorrows too. Seminaries must become adequately aware of the need to foster this form of community living, especially among those who one day will be part of the same presbyterium.

Union with one's People

A diocesan priest becomes a member of the diocesan family, which is the people of the area where he commits himself. It will be his responsibility to get close to them in a bond of empathy. He will need to get inculturated to the local community in the sense that he becomes "sensitive to its sensibilities, attentive to its reactions, capable of interpreting its manner of response.

It is an attitude of humility ever eager to listen, to learn, to correct oneself. It is a constant search for the soul of the community. It is a stepping into the inner universe of the community with a sense of respect, awe and wonder" (Bishop. T. Meenaparambil).

These words are particularly appropriate for those who come from outside the area or region in which they are incardinated. The document *Pastores Dabo Vobis* states:

> The priest needs to be aware that his "being in a particular Church" constitutes by its very nature a significant element in his living a Christian spirituality In this sense, the priest finds precisely in his belonging and dedication to the particular Church a wealth of meaning, criteria for discernment and action which shape both his pastoral mission and his spiritual life (No. 31)

Living in a parish will mean an identification with the interests, the needs, joys and sorrows of a particular people. It may be crops; it may be family problems; it may be jobs; it may be quarrels. The diocesan priest will share the total concerns of his people not so much by giving material help, but by just being present, by being a sign of God's presence and love among them, by being a bridge-builder, taking their offerings to God and returning to them the divine blessings of which he is the dispenser.

In our country the diocesan priest must also be a missionary. He has to have a concern for the non-Catholics of his parish/mission, he has to help build human communities of justice and love. The missionary dimension of his ministry will need to be infused into the local community – who also must burn with the love of Christ urging them to share the good news.

Diocesan spirituality will integrate these elements and many more. I have highlighted some points which seem immediately relevant. I could have talked of others too, but for the shortness of time. The best manual for practical guidance is the *Pastoral Guide for Diocesan Priests in Churches Dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples*. This manual could be printed in India for the seminaries.

The Seminary and Diocesan Spirituality

How does the diocesan priest walk this journey of discovery of his special diocesan spirituality? How does the seminary prepare the diocesan priest to do so? In the *Charter for Priestly*

Formation, it is stated that

> the seminary formation is structured in such a way that the seminarian can feel free to be himself and to grow in intellectual, emotional and spiritual freedom without fear or inhibitions The emphasis will be not merely on external conformity and uniform observance, but rather on inner motivation, self-discipline, personal responsibility and accountability. (3 1 4)

It adds that the seminarian himself is the main agent of his formation and therefore

> the seminary staff, structures and processes will ultimately function as facilitators in relation to the seminarian, providing him with the atmosphere and the conditions in which he will learn to assume responsibility for his own formation and make of himself the kind of priest that he is called to be by Christ in the local Church (3 1 5)

In his book *Fully Human, Fully Alive*, John Powell mentions five essential steps for a full life 1 to accept oneself, 2. to be oneself, 3 to forget oneself in loving; 4. to believe, 5. to belong. These steps, he says, normally follow the order suggested and build upon the previous accomplishments It is to be noted that 'belonging' is the fifth step The other four steps are required to make the belonging really possible From the exposition I have given, it is clear that belonging is essential to diocesan spirituality The diocesan priest has to live in communion with Christ, with the bishop, with his fellow-priests, with his people. He is expected to be 'at home' with them He will have in common and share with them his most precious possession – himself.

Seminaries will need to ask if they have the type of staff, structures and processes which enable them to assess whether the seminarian is accepting himself and is really free in his choice of the priesthood Has the seminarian been able to come in contact with his psycho-social needs in his subconscious self? In the study made by Fr Peter Lourdes and others in the book *The Human Face of the Clergy*, a comment notes· "There is a noticeable gap between the sublimity of the declared ideals and the reality and intensity of their actual problems and maladjustments Could there be unconscious infra-psychic conflict at play?" (p. 82). Another comment states "A general view of the profile reveals that this group of clergy scored highest in relationship to God lowest in emotional stability ... The low emotional stability and low socia' adeptness in relation with neighbour would have led to a flight into God" (p 84).

I have not made an in-depth study of this book, nor am I qualified to do so. I however think that it is an indication and a reason for seminaries to reflect on these points. Believing and belonging are the fourth and fifth steps in coming fully alive. They build on the first three steps of acceptance of oneself, of being oneself and of forgetting oneself in love.

The Charter on priestly formation has these words in respect of the evaluation of the spiritual formation of the seminarian:

> The following will be noted. inner freedom, that is, freedom from excessive personal anxieties and ambitions as well as from group pressures; ability to look at life with the eyes of faith; disposition to always seek, find and do God's will, growth in prayer and interior silence, readiness for selfless service, concern for the poor and the marginalised and commitment to their struggle for dignity and justice (5.6.3b)

To these may be added the points which have surfaced as special characteristics of diocesan spirituality – especially his attachment and sense of belonging to the presbyterium of his diocese and the love for the local people of the diocese.

What structures are needed in the seminary to achieve these goals? How to help the seminarian to become more aware of this specificity of his spirituality and train him to find joy and creative happiness as a diocesan priest in his priestly journey with Jesus?

Conclusion

In the *Readers' Digest*, I read: "People do not marry people, they marry what they think the person is; they marry illusions and images. The exciting adventure is finding out who the partner really is." In the world, the partner very often turns out to be a drab and uninspiring person. In the priestly vocation, the discovery of the partner is full of new grace and joy, for the partner is Jesus. It is exciting to discover his fidelity, nobility, forgiveness and love. It takes a lifetime to understand fully what He is to each of us.

A diocesan priest will want to grow in this awareness of Jesus – his partner in life. He will want to find Him in the legitimate authority of the diocese. He will discern His hidden face in his fellow priests, who like him are "other Christs." He will nurture Him in the flock under his care, often hidden in the

distressing disguise of the poor, naked and homeless. Love of Jesus will be the compelling force to think of the "other sheep" who do not yet belong to the sheepfold.

Along with Jesus is His mother – and the prayer of Pope John Paul II at the end of the post-synodal document *Pastores Dabo Vobis* can be quoted in conclusion:

> O Mother of Jesus Christ, you were with him at the beginning of his life and mission, you sought the Master among the crowd, you stood beside him when he was lifted up from the earth consumed as the one eternal sacrifice and you had John, your son, near at hand; accept from the beginning those who have been called, protect their growth, accompany your sons in their life ministry, O Mother of Priests. Amen (82).

Questions for Discussion

1. Are the four elements (union with Christ, with the bishop, with fellow-priests, with the people) accepted as the specific elements of diocesan spirituality? Could they be further elaborated? How can they be fostered in the seminary?
2. How can the seminary evaluate these elements in the process of forming the students?
3. Problems with authority are common among priests. The fault may be with the priest, authority itself, or both. It is known that problems with authority come from deeper factors often emerging from childhood experiences. What can be done to remedy this?
4. Bonding/belonging among persons without any natural or blood relationship can pose difficulties. Yet they are of the essence for both the presbyterium and the people. They are integral to diocesan spirituality. How can a seminary monitor this requirement, especially if it is a regional or national seminary? What alternative ways are to be recommended to bishops to complete the formation?
5. How can the seminary help the seminarian to identify his psycho-social needs in the sub-conscious self so that he is able to bring harmony between his ideal self and actual self? And identify those needs (especially regards authority and relationships) which are dissonant with priestly living?
6. What structures are required for the on-going formation of priests so that diocesan spirituality may be fostered?

VJTR 58 (1994) 747-751

Listen to the Spirit

Human Rights, Human Dignity

December 10th is marked as the "Human Rights Day." Are we invited to a celebration or to a funeral? It is a day of mourning and shame. Human rights have died under the totalitarian regimes of our century; they were killed on the battlefields of wars. world wars, national wars, civil wars, they had to flee with millions of people from their homelands; in camps and prisons they were disgraced, raped, tortured, starved to death; their destruction has been planned by underground Mafias; in financial scams they were ridiculed, and in the explosions of terrorism they were shattered, in our villages they were burnt by greedy landlords It is a great funeral, millions of people attend – as Christians, we cannot be absent. There are more broken hearts here than at any other funeral, more lamentations, some loud, but mostly silent, and the grave will be blessed not with holy water but with the tears of our human family.

Have we come to the end of human rights? It all started with the glorious dawn of a new era of humanity. The first declaration of human rights came from the United States, beginning with the "Bill of Rights of Virginia" (12.6 1776). The young states declared their independence, shaking off the constraining links with their tradition-bound homeland The Bill was for an eager expansion into vast areas of new land, a free development towards a future of unlimited possibilities. But God still remained in the heart of the young nation.

Thirteen years later, on 26.8 1789, France promulgated the document that shook the whole world and initiated a transformation which we call "The Revolution," the beginning of modern times, the "Declaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen" (Declaration of the rights of man and citizen). It not only swept away monarchy and nobility which had dominated the life of the nation but also claimed liberation of all restrictions imposed on us in the name of religion. Human life is free, guided only by the light of reason which had been exalted in the era of "Enlightenment" and divinized in the Revolution. On November 10th, 1793, Reason's effigy was enthroned in the Notre Dame Cathedral. Man was to be the only architect of his life and world which will be guided by the dream of "liberty, equality and brotherhood." Today we stand before the shambles of that dream.

Was it only a dream? The consciousness of human freedom and dignity is written too deeply into our human heart to be relegated to

the realm of illusions or of our futile attempts to cover the emptiness of our dreary world. So deep is this conviction that we find it in every culture in different forms, and today it is universally accepted as the basis of human relations, whatever be the ideological differences. The modern individual, believer or unbeliever, is aware of an inner sphere which is exempt from control from outside, even from civil authority. To have human rights formulated, recognized and protected is the common concern not only of single nations but of the whole human family. In the Charter of the United Nations – San Francisco, 26.6.1945 – the protection of human rights is proclaimed as one of the four aims of the world organisation, along with peace and security for all nations, friendly relations among them and the promotion of economic and cultural collaboration

Working out the Charter of Human Rights, however, proved a difficult and delicate task After long discussions, the "Declaration on Human Rights" was passed in the Assembly of 10 12.1948, with the abstention of the Eastern Block Moreover, the Declaration is only a "recommendation" to the Governments to introduce these rights in their Constitutions Today in most nations the human rights are mentioned at the beginning of the respective Constitutions

In the Indian Constitution they are placed before the norms of Government and Administration, as Part 3 "Fundamental Rights," Art 12-35 They comprise equality of all citizens before the law and equal protection against any discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, equal opportunity in public employment and abolition of untouchability, freedom of speech, movement, profession; protection against exploitation, e g, child labour, freedom of religion, and in the cultural and educational sphere, the protection of the interests of minorities

Rights must be defined, respected, enforced, their violations must be sanctioned The rights of one person imply duties of the neighbour or of the community Any agreement on human rights supposes a common understanding of human life and society In the Declaration of the United Nations human rights are based on the human dignity, thus the concrete content of these rights depends on the understanding of human dignity and human nature The history of human rights, therefore, reflects the shifting accents in the philosophy of man

During the French Revolution the dignity and independence of the individual person were asserted and meant an emancipation from the overpowering control of state authority In the course of the industrial revolution of the 19th century and its social effects, the liberal rights of the individual were complemented by his social needs: the "liberal" right to property did not help the exploited worker who needed social security. When human rights are discussed on an international level

different cultures demand respect for their own understanding of human life and society. China resents the attempts to make its inclusion in a global economy dependent on the acceptance of what they consider a Western understanding of human rights. Africans have their own traditions of family and society, different from those in Europe, and feel the need of developing their life, also in the Church, in harmony with their cultural traditions

Every generation feels new needs and claims new rights: Does the right of life include the right to end one's life – are suicide or euthanasia basic human rights? And where does the right of life begin? Does the woman's right "on her womb" prevail over the right of the child to be born – or may it be aborted?

In the turmoil of ethnic conflicts, the right of asylum has become a vital issue for many nations· people who are threatened with death have the right to live, to find shelter. This right of the persecuted becomes a duty for the neighbours to receive them. But what happens when many thousands seek refuge and overflow the borders? If immigration laws are strict, injustice is done to many (in many countries Christians have protested against tightening immigration laws); if these laws are generous, they may be abused It is a beautiful experience to see uprooted people received with care and concern by neighbouring countries so that they find a new home But relations become difficult, intolerable, if the laws are demanding, arrogant, exploitative Laws are needed, but human problems are not solved by regulations alone.

In emergency situations, in natural calamities like earthquakes, or in national catastrophes like in Rwanda, a solidarity of the human family is realized that cannot be defined in legal terms. Dying people cannot wait for legal help Immense quantities of food, clothing, medicines are needed, hundreds of volunteers offer their technical, medical, social services and work to utter exhaustion. No one could command them to risk their health, even their life, for people whom they have never seen before We need a bond of solidarity that is not merely pragmatic, based on profit or on legal injunctions A deeper unity must be found and fostered. We do need regulations and protection of life and property; we cannot live without police and army. But the human society cannot be built with teargas and bullets.

We come back to the question of the foundation of human rights, human dignity, human solidarity. The Vatican Council has recognized the Church's duty to share in the solution of these problems, to approach them "in the light from the Gospel .. the human person need to be saved, human society needs to be renewed" (*The Church in the World of Today*, n.3).

What is "the light from the Gospel" with regards human rights? Jesus never spoke about rights or the legal arrangements in our soci-

ety, but about their foundation. human dignity and solidarity. The key ideas of the human rights proclaimed in the French Revolution are actually taken from the Gospel· freedom, equality, brotherhood For Paul freedom is the mark of Christian life "Christ has set us free. Stand fast, therefore, and do not submit to a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1) For Jesus all people are equally invited to God's Kingdom He knows of no discrimination; the poor and marginalized actually enjoy preference. Among his disciples no one should claim superiority, calling himself "father or rabbi" with an air of condescendence (cf Mt 23.8), and Paul proclaims "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, neither male or female for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3.28), a shocking statement in a world of insuperable barriers of race, social status and sex Equality, however, does not mean neutral co-existence. Jesus preaches communion, solidarity and service; we need mutual forgiveness, compassion, care, concern, true love Mutual love is the distinctive mark of his disciples (Jn 13 35)

We are faced with a bewildering puzzle If the key ideas of the Gospel and the proclamation of the French Revolution are identical, how is it possible the very words of the Bible were used for the destruction of the Church? Something had gone wrong on both sides The French Revolution, based on the philosophy of the Enlightenment, sensed the immense power of the biblical triad it vibrates with the innermost longings of the human heart But the triad had been removed from the biblical soil by which it is nourished, it was uprooted and destroyed freedom became autonomy, man is a law to himself Each one builds one's life and world for oneself, equality sweeps away authority, each stands for herself or himself, for one's interests The bond of communion becomes an illusion Without God the biblical triad leads to anarchy, chaos, destruction We see this today

What was wrong with the Church? It did not present Jesus' message of God's Kingdom it had become the support of a society with three classes, nobility, hierarchy and proletariate, marked by domination, class discrimination and estrangement Though the Church of the 18th century can take pride in great saints (e g , St Alphonse), its image was distorted, no longer "a sign and instrument of communion with God and the unity of all people" (LG 1)

We ought, however, not to be distracted by problems of history but ask ourselves about the contribution of the Church to human rights today, our own share in building a better society

The Church is a community of freedom the Council has asserted it anew. Freedom is a word of powerful inspiration, it is also a dangerous word We witness the decadence of freedom all around when each is concerned with each one's individual comfort and status Christians have to give witness to true freedom Speaking about himself Paul makes the paradoxical statement "Though I am free and belong to no one, I make myself the slave of all" (1 Cor 9:19) This is freedom in the

spirit of Jesus. The Galatians are warned by Paul against the misuse of freedom: "Christ has set us free ... do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (Gal 5:1 13). If freedom means independence and degenerates into selfish licentiousness, it destroys families and communities.

The freedom in Jesus Christ recognizes equal dignity of all, in neighbourhood and in society This is guaranteed in our Indian Constitution, written 45 years ago It has not yet been fully realized. The Constitution is not only law, but also a programme to be realized through education

In the Gospel equality is linked with brotherhood/sisterhood, filled with concern, compassion, love, reaching out to all, especially those in distress Too much suffering and despair have entered our country and our world; we get used to the sight of misery, our senses get numb We excuse ourselves because we feel helpless to fill thousands of empty hands, to stop ruthless oppression Still, we ought always to live in solidarity with the world of our surroundings and keep our heart open for the agonies of our world We allow our minds to be dominated by the Media, absorbed by glamour, excited by sport events, while people are starving to death We have been fascinated by the bombastic spectacle of Comet Shoemaker-Levy's cosmic funeral on neighbouring Jupiter, and we forget the anonymous mass graves of many thousands of cholera victims in distant Rwanda – our brothers and sisters We cannot be passive spectators when we witness the death of human rights

So we observe the Human Rights Day We mourn with the millions whose life has been destroyed, whose dignity is broken. Human rights are dying, not a natural death, they are crucified, like Jesus. But there is no Christian funeral without the hope of resurrection Human dignity is embodied in the Risen Lord and comes to life in every Christian heart It must bear fruit in our society

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Correspondence

The CPCI and Priestly Formation

With great interest I read through the "Charter for the Ministry and Life of the Diocesan Priests in India" (*VJTR*, August 1994, 504-8) prepared by the CPCI. The formulation of this Charter shows much vitality, care, concern, and interest for our diocesan priests at the service of many people For this the CPCI deserves congratulations

With the same vitality, care, concern and interest the CPCI could address itself to another area in the life and ministry of our diocesan priests. that of formation in seminaries Formation is the foundation of the ministry and life of our diocesan priests. In the present Charter, it seems to me, there is a tendency to remodel a house without sufficient consideration of the foundation. While men-

tion is made in nn. 12 and 13 of using the experience of pioneering priests and utilizing lay participation in formation, the need is to go to the root (see the *Directory*, *ibid.*, p 495). This need is experienced in various ways by seminarians, staff, bishops, those in ministry, collaborators and those ministered to Perhaps more a life-giving approach to seminary formation can be found in the formation given in professions also concerned with service to others.

I am thinking in particular of the book of Norman Cousins, *Heads First, Biology of Hope* (1989) on the formation of doctors. A doctor can be *trained* to diagnose diseases and apply remedies from a list of approved medicines. The same doctor can be *formed* to meet people as they are, understand them with their illnesses and respond to them with all the expertise acquired from medical studies. Much research is done on responding to patients in this may We can consider an example of positively activating the emotions in the treatment of cancer "The connection between cancer and the expression of emotion was studied by Dr Lydia Temoshok of the University of California Her structural interview with patients measured emotional, behavioural, physical and mental reactions to events These measurements revealed that malignant melanoma patients whose attitudes and emotions were active instead of passive exhibited better immune function and a lower tumor growth (p 216)

Perhaps this type of research, so helpful in the formation of doctors, can be adapted in research towards the formation of our seminarians The issue here is formation of the heart together with the formation of the mind through academic studies Together with academic formation, it is absolutely essential that our seminarians get opportunities to grow in emotional maturity, interpersonal relationships and in prayer in a life-giving spirituality. For this purpose our seminarians need personal growth guidance, counselling, therapeutic procedures, group processes and spiritual direction from competent and understanding spiritual directors Only through such formation can they in their pastoral ministry as priests relate effectively to people in their quest for God and help those who come with emotional, spiritual and interpersonal problems

In summary, our seminary formation is mainly oriented to academics The heart formation has not received sufficient attention. The head and the heart are to be formed towards equal maturity and integration, so that our seminarians may be more understanding and life-giving in their approach to the various problems they will encounter in pastoral ministry Thus they can be priests truly in the service of the Church, the people of God, while open to understanding all our brothers and sisters in other religions, open to the whole world "The Spirit of Dialogue" by Dr A Lobo Gajiwala (*ibid*, 485-95) is an example of the need for priests with an understanding approach to inter-faith marriage Does our present formation prepare our priests for a dialogue of the heart?

The CPCI can do an immense service to our Church by undertaking the laborious task of promoting research and development of this foundational dimension of seminary formation The fruit of this labour will flow through the life and ministry of our priests to all our people Every person engaged in this endeavour and in seminary formation would profit by reading *Head First* by Norman Cousins, to imbibe the spirit of this approach to formation. In this way we move into Evangelization 2000

Atmadarshan
Digha Ghat, Patna 800011

J. KNECHT, S.J.

Book Reviews

The Bible Alive. Witness the Great Events of the Bible. Bible Text John D. CLARE, Commentary Henry WANSBROUGH. London, Harper Collins Publishers, 1993, £14.99 Pp.256 ISBN 0-00-513002-6

This interesting introductory book, beautifully produced, intends to infuse life into major parts of the biblical story of God among us. It attempts to take the modern reader into the world of the text through chosen events by quoting portions of the text and accompaning these with photos and commentary

The photos are a key aspect of the book. There are a series of excellent photos of artefacts from various biblical periods, and another series which appear to be like stills from a film on the Bible shot in Palestine. The figures are dressed according to ancient customs and houses, artefacts, military equipment belong to the ancient world yet the actors often look like Hollywood extras and somehow too modern. However, by recreating biblical life, the realistic photos do stir the readers' imagination and positively help them build a picture of the world somewhat akin to ancient Semitic and Jewish life and therefore aid a more authentic reading of the text.

Another aid is the competent commentary on the text and ancient culture The commentary is reliable and informative (literary, archeological, historical, cultural. .aspects of life) and theological I would state more clearly that many OT texts are more folk history than "history" and also emphasize the importance of the faith interpretation.

The quotations of the biblical texts are selective and brief. The interplay between the photos, the commentary and biblical texts help readers enter that world and listen to the Word of God

The maps are very good and the indices and glossary help make good use of this book. Looking up the index I note that it does not include many items explained in the commentary and [illegible] so a reader in a hurry would not know that a commentary on many significant words can be found in the book.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Jesus My Lord. By Brojendra Nath BANERJEE Delhi ISPCK for CISRS, 1990 Pp. xviii-156. Rs 50 (hc 75) ISBN 81-7214-181-5.

The author was originally a scholar in the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in his native Calcutta and has been involved in a number of developmental activities of the UN, the Government of India, the Ford Foundation .. He has authored books on special problems, education, international aid, cooperation (for some details see *India Who's Who 1990-91*, INFA Publications, p. 128A) Himself a convert to Christianity at the age of 26 he published in 1982 an important book, *Religious Conversions in India* (Harnam Publications, New Delhi), and is involved in the Delhi-based Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society.

This book contains 22 essays (called "sermons" in CISRS's Director Saral K. Chatterji's *Preface*), simple reflections on the Bible covering many aspects of Christian life They are divided into five sections around the themes of Christmas, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Sermons of Jesus Christ and an Appendix on the Trinity and the centrality of Love. Some of the chapters are more in the form of notes and references on the themes reflected upon than full-fledged essays

We lack in India printed material coming from converts of the stature of Mr Banerjee May we hope that one day we shall have an extended autobiography about the reasons that led him "to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and Lord on Palm Sunday of 1962", and why he has "defied all odds to remain faithful to him" (p. xi)?

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land. The African American Churches and Ecumenism. By William D. Watley. Geneva: WCC 1993. Pp. 69. $7.95. ISBN 2-8254-1104-3.

The author allows us to visit as it were the African American Churches, "the independent indigenous institutions of a 'third world people' in a first world context." We are invited into their inner life of worship and protest to listen to their theology which enabled them to find God and meaning in the midst of early deep racial discrimination and slavery and the later segregation, multiple forms of discrimination, oppression and injustice and finally empowered them in the long struggle for human rights The descriptions of injustice and segregation make you ask how could humans be so utterly inhuman The descriptions of the life of black people by Martin Luther K·ng leave you aghast.

However these churches have over the years organized themselves and more recently entered into dialogue with other American churches (white) and members of the WCC They have had a definite impact on the international scene by their specific witness and commitment to justice and liberation All these aspects of their life over the years are described in concise and informative ways

The opening chapter introduces the variety of churches and their history Watley, a minister himself, describes the functions of worship in the context of the life of the Black People in terms of praise, pastoring and prophecy – the image of Christ crucified breaking down walls (Eph 2 13-18) is one of the theological foundations for worship and a spur for prophecy (pp.29-33 and 61-65). The book enables us to understand ecumenism among black churches, the development of black theology and black critiques of white ecumenism

The ecumenical ventures among black churches are often forgotten in the history of ecumenism, being judged to be less important in whole ecumenism. Black theology rose both in the individual churches and also in a powerful way within the union of churches. The theology is contextual and arose more among the people and pastors than the professional theologians. An interesting book.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

The Future of Prophetic Christianity. Essays in Honor of Robert McAfee Brown. Ed. by Denise Lardner CARMODY and John Tully CARMODY. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993 Pp. vi-170. $ 16.95. ISBN 0-88344-8971.

"This little book carries a big charge of emotion. It is a *Festschrift* for Robert McAfee Brown, created by his friends and students, who present it to him with much love and gratitude. Bob only agreed to the appearance of this book on the condition that it not focus on himself or his own work but rather on what now strikes him as an urgent issue the prophetic responsibilities of the Christian churches While accepting this condition, we contributors have nonetheless hoped that by dealing with various aspects of such prophetic responsibilities, we might still pay proper homage to a man whose entire career has exemplified the vocation of a latter-day prophet. With learning, grace, openness, charity, and, perhaps most winningly, lovely humor, Bob Brown has taught all whose lives he has touched how ecumenical and liberating the Word of God can be. So, it is a great pleasure for us to offer back to him a small token of appreciation, set in the genre about which he himself has taught us volumes the provocative, one hopes prophetic, essay " With these words the Preface introduces the volume. All those who have been touched by the numerous writings of McAfee Brown will rejoice at having this collection. His bibliography counts 25 volumes ranging from Dialogue to Vietnam, from Protestantism to Vatican II (where he was a Presbyterian observ-

ogy, from Gutierrez to Elie Wiesel, from the Bible to Liberation Theology.

The 18 essays are divided into three equal parts: Challenges, Resources and Varieties of Prophetic Teaching. All focus on the prophetic vocation. The first part touches on some of most prominent issues of today: South Africa (by Allan Boesak), Colonialism, Native Americans, Women, the UN and World Order .. The second part makes soundings in the resources available in Protestantism, Catholicism (John Coleman), a Midrash on Lot's story (Elie Wiesel), Politics and the Social Order (Gregory Baum), Liturgy . Among the Varieties of Prophetic Teaching, education (like in Ellacuria's University) takes a central place in various essays, but the media are also included.

The "interlude" between parts I and II offers five lovely poems by Dorothee Soelle celebrating specially friendship and music Between Parts II and III a tongue-in-cheek essay by "Saint Hereticus," who is "closely identified with R. McAfee Brown," on the economic jargon will delight the reader, all the more as it enfolds nine artistic black and white photos of the subject of this homage. The Selected Bibliography will be helpful to those who want to know more about the humanist theologian and committed activist who is Robert McAfee Brown

G GISPERT-SAUCH

The Discovery of Kepler's Laws. The Interaction of Science, Philosophy and Religion. By Job Kozhamthadam, S.J. Notre Dame. University of Notre Dame Press, 1994 Pp xii-316 $ 39 95. ISBN 0-268-00868-X.

Reader in Philosophy of Science at the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, the author offers us a research into the epistemology of science, specifically into the way in which J. Kepler (1571-1630) came to accept heliocentrism and discover the first two laws of planetary motion on the basis of the accurate observations of his predecessor Tycho Brache. This lucid and well-documented study stresses the interaction of religion, philosophy and empirical observation in the growth of science. None of the factors can be omitted, though one or the other acquire a greater predominance at specific moments.

The first hundred pages analyse Kepler's system of thought: God as Optimus Creator, Trinity, One and Simple, Rational, Geometer, Active Force, Source of Light and a God of Music. Human beings are co-creators, rational, geometers, dynamic, recipients of God's light, lovers of harmony. Nature reflects the reality of the triune God and is therefore sacred. Hence 'astronomers are priests' (41), while religion is also rational Kepler's philosophy, influenced by Neo-Platonism, was realistic to the point of the world being 'mathematizable' and precise In this world of unity, order, harmony and dynamism, causality and sufficient reason are operative ways of understanding. There is a uniformity in nature which allows for universalization of the laws discovered in particular experiments. Another principle of nature is economy· nature does nothing in vain and does it with the least amount of resources The body of the book enters into the world of astronomy in the 16th and 17th centuries and follows step by step the process by which Kepler came to discover his laws. At each step the author shows the convergence of empirical observation, philosophical and religious ideas (or, perhaps, religious symbolism). Thus, for example, the sun was for Kepler the image of God the Father and its central place in the universe was in harmony with his biblical creed

The author makes his own reflections: "We have seen that in Kepler's discovery the interaction, or working together, of all three factors (observation, philosophy, religion) are required. Can such an interaction be considered normative for all science?' Although I emphasize the positive and constructive role of philosophy and religion in his scientific work, I do not propose their

[illegible] for all good science. It [illegible] argue that they are much less [illegible] must be always present in scientific reasoning. That more general [illegible] about the 'logic of discovery' is a subject for future work. But we at least see here an important case in the history of science in which philosophical and religious ideas did play a central role. Hence any adequate philosophical interpretation of scientific change must allow for the role of such principles in the development of science: it must be recognized that such principles can play a legitimate part in that development, whether or not they are operative throughout" (252-3)

Science and religion are for Kepler collaborators, not enemies. But for this both need "flexibility." It is interesting to note that, in spite of his Galileo notoriety, Cardinal Bellarmino is shown as more open to Kepler's Copernicanism than Luther himself (254) Kepler was "a transitional figure who contributed significantly to the passage from medieval to modern science"

Theologians will be more interested in the conclusion which gives an integrated view of Kepler's thought and then assesses his influence in theology, specially biblical interpretation, and on the philosophy of science Thus we know that more than three centuries before *Divino Afflante Spiritu* Kepler subscribed to the theology of divine 'accomodation' (255) and "advocated a nonliteral interpretation, specially in passages where Scriptures talks about scientific issues" (254) He uses a charming metaphor deriving from Bonaventure which today we can perhaps appreciate better than the people of his time "Kepler put the conflict in another way also God has both tongue and hands (fingers) The Holy Book is the word of God, the work of God's tongue. The Book of Nature is the deed of God, the work of God's hands. Insofar as astronomy is the study of the Book of Nature, true astronomical laws are nothing but the laws governing the works of God's hands. To say that astronomy and the Holy Scripture [illegible] contradict each other is tantamount to denying any coordination between God's tongue and hands. Since such can never be the case, he concluded: 'Therefore in matters which are quite plain everyone with strong religious scruples will take the greatest care not to twist the tongue of God so that it refutes the finger of God in nature'" (254).

This book will be appreciated by historians of science. Its elegant and flowless presentation make it a pleasure to read. It is true that today we see the need to go beyond the mechanical philosophy of science which, with Galileo, Descartes, Leibnitz and Newton, Kepler helped to develop (he compares the heavenly machine to a kind of clockwork, rejecting the view that it is a kind of divine, living being). But we can ignore this period of the development of science and reject its own truths only at our cost

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Christian Totality. Theology of the Consecrated Life By Basil COLE, O.P. and Paul CONNER, O P Bombay: St Paul's, 1990 Pp. 257 Rs 45 ISBN 1-7109-112-1

The authors begin by denying what seems to be a sociological trend Religious life, they maintain, will continue. They point to the current upsurge of vocations in the Third World. One wonders how long this will last – at least in India, with the spread of family planning

Appropriately they start by describing the vocation of the lay Christian, emphasising the dignity of this life and its mission to transform the world. After trying to show the distinction between the religious and lay vocations they deal with the vows, community life and the apostolate of the religious. A lot of time and effort is spent on distinguishing between the laity and religious. The idea of the laity as 'leaven' in society is stressed. The authors ad-

that lay people can be holier than the religious – but the latter start with an advantage. What is the advantage? The vows and community life. But they go on to say that grace will fail no one in his or her particular call. So one wonders! There are different calls, but to talk in this day and age of higher or lower states, seems ingenuous to put it mildly.

In the second chapter the authors talk of religious life as a spirituality more consuming – total dedication to God who is supremely loved. But again the comparison comes, this time in an unusual form. "Growth in Christ's life is minimally observed in those who freely observe Christ's commandments." The reference is to John 14:23. But this text refers to the divine indwelling, which in turn is the introduction to a deep mystical union, far deeper than most religious ever attain. Of course it is true that consecrated persons have more time and freedom for prayer and spiritual activities. But a lay person with proper training and inspiration can, in and through work, be as intimately united with God

The authors point to two modern errors. One eliminates the distinction between religious and lay people The other, less prevalent after *Lumen Gentium* ch.V, would suggest that holiness is for religious, not for lay people. The different aspects of religious life are dealt with including their proper relationship with the hierarchy. All religious should be contemplative in some way, even the 'active' ones.

The vows. after noting the biblical and conciliar vision of chastity the authors attend to the practical aspects Chastity can and should be positive in its motivation – to love God completely and therefore to give up venereal pleasure. They mention but do not elaborate on the personal spousal dimension of chastity.

In the chapter on poverty – one of the best in the book – they note the paradox: modern religious want to have all the ... free from ... selves more to spiritual purpose; sadly, some ... conveniences and forget the ... The ideal is to avoid two extremes: deifying poverty, material poverty in itself, and deifying material comforts as modern necessities. The authors go back to the Gospels and early Christians for models. Basil found poverty not only an antidote to selfishness but also a means of complete self-dedication to God. It is true that poverty is a means, not an end. Goals other than poverty give poverty its value as Brother Roger of Taizé discovered. Ultimately the poor are blessed not because they possess nothing but because they possess God.

Obedience, the authors maintain, is the most difficult and most mysterious vow and counsel. As a reaction to previous over-strictness, religious turned to democratic decision making, so that the superior becomes only the facilitator while those who can, through training or otherwise, manipulate the group really make the decisions. Yet true obedience has valuable fruits: (1) Pedagogic: it acts as master in the school of perfection, that is in love of God and neighbour, (2) Mystical. it prepares for contemplation; (3) Moral: it helps towards perfect worship and service; (4) It organizes common life in fraternal harmony, (5) Apostolic: it directs effectively the family works of charity; (6) Ascetical: it activates the whole of regular discipline

But the biggest challenge to religious today is that which distinguishes or should distinguish them from others – namely, community life. Modern psychological gimmicks – group dynamics, T.A. etc., are brought in to help, but often they do more harm than good. "Skilful" religious can use these to help themselves. Thus "free of the responsibilities, worries and risks normal for the lay person, a religious who is skilful in side-stepping the weight of obedience, poverty and contribution to communal-

ty, living while appearing to be faithful to them, can grow into an old-bachelor or old-maid type who has settled down to getting almost everything available and giving very little" (p 213) Personally I found this chapter the least satisfactory All the faults connected with modern community life are outlined, but the solution seems hardly adequate As a non-religious it may seem temerarious to suggest, yet it seems to me that all genuine Christian community life must be built round Christ's last desperate prayer for unity (Jn 17 20-23 and Eph 4 1-4), texts that are not even mentioned by the authors The Trinitarian unity gives the model and the Holy Spirit is the source of unity It is the Spirit that must give the unity in each community but each member must cooperate There is a final chapter showing how the apostolate flows from religious life

As can be seen from the above this is a very comprehensive study of religious life today. But the fact that the authors are professors is evident Though very instructive and informative, the book is not likely to set religious on fire

R.H LESSER

John of the Cross· Conferences and Essays By Members of the Institute of Carmelite Studies and Others Washington ICS Publications, 1992 Pp x-195 $9 95 ISBN 0-935216-18-19

It is sad that St John of the Cross has a negative image – in more senses than one He is generally considered a negative, austere and not very attractive kind of saint Also his teaching, with its stress on *nada* – nothing, self-denial, mortification as necessary to the higher realms of mystical prayer, is generally considered too high, too mystical, too difficult for ordinary mortals

This book does much to soften that image It begins with a delightful description of his life and (hard) times Then Daniel Chowning shows that in John of the Cross there is no such thing as absolute negation or self-denial for its own (masochistic) sake It all springs from and leads to an experience of God's love – and is achieved by imitating Jesus' complete self-gift.

John's theology, especially his mystical theology, says Kieran Kavanaugh (who also gave us an excellent modern translation of the saint's works) in his stimulating article, is essentially and basically Christocentric In his approach to God, faith and love are inextricably interwoven Reason does have a place, though apparently a negative one In the *Spiritual Canticle* John says "Never pause to love and delight in your understanding and experience of God, but love and delight in what you cannot understand or experience of him Such is the way of seeking him in faith" (1 12)

In an interesting study Kevin Culligan shows how remarkably similar John's technique in spiritual direction was to that of the late eminent psychotherapist Carl Rogers In an intriguingly entitled chapter "John of the Cross for Carpenters," Kevin Read shows how John's *Caridad de la vida* – atmosphere of love – can spread to and permeate the lives of ordinary lay men and women Was not John himself a carpenter – who spent more time in building than in writing? The secret is not to get involved in work as an end in itself – we must be open to the Spirit

Like all Christian saints, John of the Cross was passionately in love with Jesus Christ His writings either explicitly or implicitly show this, as Regis Jordan explains There is a comparatively brief chapter on Mary and the Holy Spirit in John and his writings and longer and more complicated ones on discipleship and embodied love

The book ends with a chapter on the influence of John of the Cross in the U.S The author, Stephen Payne, admits that the land that worships the almighty dollar would seem unlikely soil for John's austere spirituality to flower He shows traces of John's influence

through other Carmelites, like the two Teresa's and the Carmelite monasteries that were the earliest to be established in the States And of course he has to mention Thomas Merton, who by his life and writings did more to promote the Carmelite ideal in America than anyone else, and, rather surprisingly, Dorothy Day The book is interesting, useful and indeed necessary to give a fuller and more complete picture of John and his work and influence

R H LESSER

Book Notices

These short notes are intended to inform readers of booklets available and useful for local libraries and for ordinary people The series is published by ISPCK (Navdin Prakashan Kendra) Delhi The editing of some of the books could be much better

Discrimination Against Women By Punam Amy BAKHLA 1993 Pp 12 Rs 3 The authoress describes various areas of discrimination and success of women

Participation in Suffering and Struggling By Rev V K NUH 1993 Pp.43 Rs 10 Worried by the lack of adequate Church involvement in Indian society, Nuh develops a theological basis for involvement, describes areas demanding involvement and gives an account of past involvement

Nuclear War Threat To Mankind By Arupanand NAIK, 1993 Pp 50 Rs 6 Much information about nuclear energy, power and bombs is given and the effects of nuclear bombing and radiation is gathered here The author wants to inform his readers so that they be aware of the threat of the misuse of nuclear energy.

Social Welfare Administration in India. By G Stanley Jaya KUMAR 1993 Pp.35 Rs 5. This is a book of information on various types of social welfare and groups in India

Health Education. By [illegible]. 1993. Pp.9. Rs 3. Another book informing the reader of this area of welfare.

Wither Communal Harmony By N V.THOMAS 1993 Pp 24. Rs 4.50. An airforce officer both narrates his experience of communal harmony and its lack and the dangers he sees in the growing communal tensions and the disappearance of tolerance in Indian society

Two Shiny Stars By Prativa DEY. 1993, Pp 20 Rs 4 A story of a woman, many areas of whose life were destroyed by her husband and others. The story is credible yet the narrative does not really ring true.

Survival Realities of Street Children. By N G DESHPANDE 1993 Pp 31. Rs 6 This booklet narrates the author's experience of a particular street kid with information about this major social problem and the challenges it poses to citizens and society

Indigenous Identity. Crisis and Reawakening By S Bosu MULLICK, Edwin JAYDAS, Anto AKKARA and Anita JAYDAS 1993 Pp 90 Rs 30 ISBN 81-7214-173-4

I am not sure about the origin of this small and valuable study In the appendix the UNO Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, as revised by the Members of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, is printed in full This is a valuable document. Reference to this document will be made within the other essays. The Indian Government has officially denied that there are any indigenous people within India. This denial, its underlying causes and effects are discussed especially in Mullick's "Indigenous People of India Identity Crisis and Search for a New Identity" (pp 5-33) which summarizes papers by S.K Chatterjee, M V D Bogaert, R D Munda, W. Fernandes and the author. This is probably the more important contribution to the book, informative and analytical.

The other three contributions are "The Adivasis and Land," "The Adivasis

and Forest" and "Adivasi, Water and Natural Resources " These fill out and add further substance, information and analysis to the first article They deal with specific areas land and its alienation, forest destruction or the exclusion of Tribals from forests and its effects on tribal life, the great Dam and mining projects and the consequent ecological destruction and displacement of people The authors write with commitment and provide sound information A valuable small book

From *Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra, Indore, (1994)* we have four story books in Hindi for children, interesting stories with an educative and enjoyable character There are attractively illustratred and produced These are good gifts for children and children's libraries The titles by Krishnakant DUBE are **Pari ki Seek**, Pp 16. Rs 10 **Aik Tha Moti** Pp 20 Rs 10 and **Pyaj ka Saffar**, Pp 20 Rs 10, and **Nanaji ke Bagee‹che mem**, by Kamala Sarma "SYAMLA" Pp 40 Rs 15

Motivating Thoughts For Every-day of the Year

By Fr Denis G PEREIRA and Frank VAZ Bombay Saint Paul Publications, 1994 Pp 199 Rs 22 ISBN 81-7176-134-8

Written for personal prayer or to be read at Parish or small group Masses or in prayer groups, school assemblies the book provides reflections for each day of the year Each reflection is about half a page and concludes with a pithy *mantra-like prayer The reflections* are to be read slowly, to be pondered in the heart A particular theme – prayer, responsibilities, life – often runs over a number of days The reflections are about attitudes which affect actions, are non-denominational, reflect that wisdom which life teaches and are simple in thought and style A busy person who dips each day into the book will find his or her daily life becomes richer and more humane

Meditations on the Life of Christ.

Meditations by Ian GEORGE. Illustrations by David BINNS Melbourne, Collins Dove. 1992. ISBN 085924-982-4

The brightly coloured illustrations for the sixteen meditations on incidents from Jesus' life are particularly symbolic and yet realistic and appealing The one page reflections on scenes like the baptism of Jesus, Christ at table with harlots, the transfiguration, crucifixion. are evocative, surprising and related to our life and not the usual type of reflections on biblical texts These can lead the slow and reflective reader to pause and at times to simple prayer

The Philosophy of Politics.

By Antonio ROSMINI Vol 1 The Summary Cause *for the Stability or Downfall of Human* Societies Pp x-96 ISBN 1-899093-00-1 Vol 2 Society and its Purpose Pp xii-455 ISBN1-899093-05-2 N p Durham Rosmini House,1994

In November 1988 and in May this year we mentioned this valuable collection of Rosmini's works being edited from England The collection is timely as in the near future, we are told,the neglected priest and philosopher is going to be beatified His thought on politics and rights and many other areas of theology is still relevant today We are greatful for an elegant presentation

Contemporary Issues in Mission.

Ed by J Andrew KIRK Department of Mission, Selly Oak Colleges, 1994 Pp X-89 N P ISBN 0-900653-19-1

The cluster of theological centers at Selly Oak is a foremost centre for reflection on mission and interreligious dialogue The events and situation of the contemporary world and new emerging theologies in all churches make the Christians concerned with mission to reassess and update their understanding of the Christian task which they see as deriving from Christ the Lord. The

Concluded on page 737

Vidyajyoti
Journal of Theological Reflection
Vol. LVIII DECEMBER 1994 No.12

VJTR 58 (1994) 761-770

Women: A New Reality,* New Responses

Dr Astrid LOBO GAJIWALA

In September next year the UN Sponsored Decennial International Meeting on Women will take place in Beijing. It is not too early to prepare for this important event. We publish here a reflection on the Women's Movement with concrete suggestions for all of us to help the movement to be the leaven of a new more just society, at the economic and social levels, as well as in the Church. Subtitles have been added to the article Dr Lobo Gajiwala lives at 12/A, TMC Staff Quarters, Mandala, Bombay 400088.

The decision to feed the world is the real decision.
No revolution has chosen it.
For that choice requires that women shall be free.
Adriene Rice in *Hunger*

We are in the midst of a revolution. A revolution about "Womenspirit rising." It is a revolution that forces us to redefine our personal identity, questioning our very understanding of 'man' and 'woman'. It is a revolution that throws our most intimate relationships into turmoil, pitting husband against wife and parent against child. It is a revolution that disturbs the status quo challenging traditional social and ecclesial structures based on the supremacy of the male. It is a revolution that raises more questions than it can answer. But, most important, it is a revolution that not only seeks justice for women but aspires to create a more just world. For feminists are basically humanists, and any agenda that supports the liberation of women has the capacity to work for human liberation.

The Liberation Movement

For many of us however, the "Women's Liberation Movement" conjures up unattractive images. Defiant women breaking

the social taboos of behaviour and language; strident females shouting slogans and staring up discontent with their talk of "rights," even in the Church; humourless women on guard against sexist language and patronising males, most especially in the Church!

But if we dig a little deeper, another picture emerges. Women considered "useless" because they cannot cook or keep house; women struggling with the double burden of a full-time job and never-ending household duties; women denied education, job opportunities and promotions because in the end they are "just going to get married and have babies"; women broken by the customs of a society that kills the female infant, that looks down on the unmarried woman, that sells its daughters for a dowry, that ill-treats its widows; women who are always *paraya dhan* ("someone else's property") with no right to their family property; women who are imprisoned in their homes or in burkas, because men cannot control their lust; women who are confined to the kitchen because their husbands will only eat food cooked by their hands; women who are beaten by alcoholic husbands; women denied ordination and decision-making in the Church. This is the reality of "Women's Lib." It is not something that involves a special breed of woman. It is something that involves every woman House wives, professionals, rural women, religious sisters — ordinary women caught up in the everyday routine of living

What women are seeking today is an opportunity to celebrate their unique personhood. They are not fighting for equal rights, but for the rights of the human person. What they want is the freedom to fulfil their individual potential and move beyond the roles defined by society and the Church. In fact, for many of us, women, the word "role" has begun to pose a problem. It limits our vision and robs us of our freedom: the freedom to make choices, without being told that our place is in the home; the freedom to be, without being told that women have to always be submissive and self-sacrificing. To put it bluntly, we are tired of living up to other people's expectations of what a woman is supposed to be and do Yes, we enjoy being mothers, but we also want to pursue higher education and a career; and if we take on the running of the household it is often because we have no option. Constantly available mother, devoted wife, accommodating daughter-in-law and subservient daughter of the Church

— these are the roles expected of us. None of them make room for us as persons, with special needs and differing aspirations.

As a Catholic feminist rooted in the biblical faith in Creation (Gen 1:26-28), I see women's struggle as an attempt to reclaim our share of God's likeness. For too long now we have been content to be helpmates to Adam; it is time to focus on ourselves as images of God As John Paul II points out, in his Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*,[1*] the oft-quoted "he shall rule over you" is not only a violation of the equality "which is both a gift and a right from God the Creator" but is a "domination" that is a result of sin and "diminishes the true dignity of the man."

Economic Co-Dependence

Unfortunately, women's issues are still largely seen as "women's problems " Most men, content with their ruling class privileges, are not even able to see a "problem." They cannot make the connection between rape and the patriarchal pattern of society that condones domestic violence. They cannot understand what a Mother God has to do with women's self-image They refuse to accept that motherhood and domestic work can be manipulated to reduce women to non-persons.

What such men fail to realise is that women's liberation brings with it freedom for men too. Freedom from the strain of power and responsibility that comes from being the sole supporters of the family. Freedom to choose job satisfaction over monetary remuneration. Freedom to be themselves without denying their emotions and insecurities. Freedom to move from stressful hierarchical structures into participatory forms of functioning both at home and at work. And, most important, freedom to experience the joys of being sensitive, caring husbands and gentle, nurturing fathers.

If men and women are to be free, however, two issues that must be addressed are women's economic rights and women as childbearers.

Economic independence is one of the keys to women's liberation, for wealth is intimately linked with power. In every sphere of life, be it at the local, national or international level, the wealthy are the powerful. They assume a position of superiority over others and demand subordination. So it is in the family. The concept of the father as the primary breadwinner is strongly

* References at the end of the article, p.770

linked with his role as head of the household. He is in-charge, and the woman is only fit for domestic work. She is devalued because her efforts do not bring any direct monetary gain.

For women who do join the paid work-force their contribution is considered secondary for two reasons: (1) their primary work is supposed to be homemaking and childbearing; (2) their income is considered supplementary to their spouse's. As a result they are often paid less and offered less opportunities for advancement.

Even Catholic thought presents the economic rights of workers primarily as men's economic rights. From Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* to John Paul II, the right to a family wage is understood as a wage paid to the father as head of the family, so that there is sufficient income for the mother to stay at home and perform her "primary" duty.[2]

The irony is that nearly one third of the world's families are now headed by women as a result of male migration from rural areas to cities for jobs, or death of spouses.[3] In our country the all-pervasive problem of alcoholic husbands has further added to the number of female-run households. In Govandi, for example, a part of our parish, there are 23 Catholic families, 18 of which have lost the husbands to alcohol. On an average there are 4 children to a family. The women survive by selling fish outside the liquor dens. They have neither education nor job skills.

What is urgently required is a redefinition of the family in terms of economic co-dependence.[2] We need to recognise the economic contribution not only of those who go out to work, but also of those who work within the home Women who work at home save us the expenses and responsibility of employing domestic workers to do the job. Further, by providing their support at home, they leave their men free to contribute to the economic production of society What is more, we seldom realise that if women did not choose to have babies and care for them, society would cease to exist Something that is already happening in Europe with their negative growth rates. And precisely because these European countries have realised the value of women's role as mothers, they have provided supportive structures.

In France, for instance, children are seen as conservators of their family traditions and culture. They are considered a part of public responsibility and parents are rewarded for making so vital a contribution to society. Thus, for a woman expecting a

third child, the national social security system will cover the bulk of her prenatal, delivery and post-partum expenses. She is guaranteed a six-month paid maternity leave, two months longer than for each of her previous pregnancies, to cover the added responsibilities of an expanding family. In the third month of her pregnancy, she will begin to accrue monthly benefits, eventually totalling $ 343, to defray the cost of another infant. If the mother decides not to return to work, she will get $ 563 in "parental education benefits" to reward her decision to stay at home. If she does return to work, she can count on subsidized day care. All of this is in addition to the $ 394 in family-related benefits and rent subsidies the family already enjoys each month, and the $ 1.074 annual tax deduction they receive for child care.[4]

In the Tasks at Home and in the Church

Another aspect that needs to be examined is the patriarchal division of labour in the family. We have to dispense with judgements like 'superior' work and 'inferior' work. Let us concentrate on each one's valuable contribution to the common good of the family. Let us stop thinking of man as the economic agent and head of the family, and women as the economically dependent "heart" of the family. It is not enough for us to educate our daughters and see that they are economically independent if at the same time we do not train our sons to shoulder some of the responsibilities in the home Cooking, cleaning, marketing and caring for children must be seen as shared responsibilities. If not, women will always end up with the double burden. If we are serious about giving women equal economic opportunities we have to stop being guided by predetermined role expectations. Instead, let us, together, in freedom, make decisions about our function in the family and in the work place.

The crux of any analysis of women's lives is women s role as childbearers. There is no running away from this biological fact. What makes the difference, however, is our response to this reality. Catholic social thought, for instance, takes a paternalistic and protective attitude. In John Paul II's *Mulieris Dignitatem*, although an attempt has been made to see men and women as equal persons, again and again, however, there are references to the "feminine" role and women is defined in terms of motherhood and virginity.[1] We have only to think of defining man according to his narrow function as father to realise the absurdi-

ty of this description.

Feminism, on the other hand, asserts that women should not be limited to this single reality. It sees women as persons. It appreciates the unique potential of each woman. It supports their right to make choices, and describes women in relation to their work, their emotions, their economy, their politics and their culture.

As a result of this perspective, feminists have begun questioning the existing social structures, be they schools, governments or churches What has become clear is that these structures are inadequate They are geared to the traditional division of men in the public sphere and women in the domestic sphere. As a result they are too narrow to address the multiple demands and talents of women's lives Since they are shaped by men's experience they have little or no space for the unique experience of women, their childbearing capacity and their multiple responsibilities as home-maker, care-giver and wage-earner.[2]

It is time we transformed these structures to accommodate women A small beginning has been made with company policies of maternity leave and 'flexitime' and the growing number of couples who are sharing the work of parenting. But there is so much more to be done Paternity leave, a four-hour working day for parents with pre-schoolers, "free nurseries, school lunches, family cafeterias built into every housing complex, service companies that will do household chores in a regular, businesslike way: all these will make it possible for both mother and father to work, and to have equal leisure with the children at home."[5]

In the Church set-up, the first step towards transformation would be a change in attitudes. Men would have to be convinced about the need of women's participation in the pastoral and ministerial life of the Church Only if men volunteer to get meals on the table, supervise homework and care for the children, can women be freed to make their contribution outside the home. Parishes on their part must make provision for babysitters, and if need be, volunteers to supervise the studies of older children. Meetings and programmes must be scheduled for the convenience of women, and safe travel home must be ensured. If we truly value the offerings of our women then all this must be made a reality.

Change of Mentality

Besides transforming structures, feminism also insists that

society has a responsibility to women precisely because they bear children. Adequate nutrition, housing, health care, child care, education and a safe environment, these are some of the rights of society's mothers. In recognising them we shift the question beyond the biological reality to the common good.

One common misconception about the women's movement is that women want to exchange places with men. We have moved past the stage of being trailblazers — the first woman executive, the first woman police commissioner, the first woman Supreme Court judge We have now begun questioning the prevailing model of success and its oppressive nature. We are seeking to move from the patriarchal system of domination and control to more participatory structures. No more hierarchies that diminish the potential of the "other." What we want is meaningful and effective participation of people in the decisions that shape their lives, both in society and the Church. We are not even interested in an "equality" that uses men as the norm. What we want is a *mutuality* that allows us to affirm different ways of being[6] and an *equivalence* that recognises that although women and men are different in various respects, they are nevertheless human *persons of equal value.*[9]

Which brings me to the biggest stumbling block for many Catholic feminists -- the institutional patriarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. This patriarchy is revealed in the all-male hierarchy, in the male God-language and imagery, in the male-defined theology, in the male-biased scriptural exegesis and morality, and the subtle but all-pervasive misogyny

There are, however, some glimmers of hope like John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* ("Peace on Earth"), 1963, where for the first time women enter Catholic social thought in their own right. He writes: "Since women are becoming ever more conscious of their human dignity, they will not tolerate being treated as inanimate objects or mere instruments, but claim, both in domestic and in public life, the rights and duties that befit a human person" (41).

This theme was taken up again in *Gaudium et Spes* (The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World), the "centrepiece of social teaching" that emerged from the Second Vatican Council [2] Women were included in the fundamental dignity and the fundamental rights of the human person. Further, every type of discrimination was to be "overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent" (29) What is sad however, is that

in the same document the "new social relationships" of women and men were included in the section on "Imbalances in the Modern World!" Patriarchy perceived the changes flowing from women's growing consciousness as a source of discord in the family rather than as a sign of God's presence in the world.

An analysis of the various Church documents shows that while denouncing sexual discriminations these documents have always cautioned women to "assume their full proper role in accordance with their own nature" (*GS*) and "not appropriate to themselves male characteristics contrary to their own feminine originality "[1] This seems to imply that women's nature, and presumably their rights, are different from men's. An attitude that becomes an obstacle when viewing the liberation of women within the context of human liberation

And yet, as feminist theologian Maria Riley writes,

> the rise of women's consciousness of their own dignity is a 'sign of our times' As such it demands the attention of the Church. The Church cannot simply reach back into its tradition to address this reality because it "lacks a strong tradition regarding the equality and basic dignity and worth of women "[7] Furthermore, the current reflection and articulation of women's experiences is raising new issues both in society and in the Church [2]

For feminists, the key question is "Who reads the 'signs of the times'?" Or, more pointedly, "whose reading is listened to?" In the end, in the Church, it is celibate, clerical men who interpret the 'signs of the times'. They alone make the decisions regarding the response to these 'signs' in the social mission of the Church [2]

Unfortunately, in practice, this response has been largely negative. In fact, the resistance of the hierarchy to the challenges offered by feminism and Third World liberation movements has been so frustrating that many Catholics have chosen to leave the Church. "Why bother with the Catholic Church?" they ask. "There's a revolution going on, and if the Church cannot recognise the 'signs of the times' perhaps it's best to leave it behind and work for change in secular society." As Rosemary Radford Ruether points out, such questions cannot be taken lightly. They are asked from a "profound experience of existential despair."[8]

For those of us who choose to stay "in" Church, the first question we need to ask ourselves is: What exactly are we loyal to in the Church? Does our loyalty lie with the institution? Or with the gospel and the more than 627 million people who have

the "gospel of Jesus Christ as a context of meaning in their lives"?[8] Feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether puts it thus:

> Loyalty needs to be to people and to the gospel. Institutions should be called to become servants of the people through the gospel, instead of seeking to substitute themselves for the community and for the Holy One and trying to make themselves the object of our loyalty [8]

We are the Church

Our second step must be claiming ourselves as 'Church' Instead of thinking in terms of doing something "for the Church," we need to work out what we should do "for ourselves." What is it that we need to build a community of faith? What kind of liturgical worship will touch our lives as women and men in relationship? What kind of pastoral ministry will help us to grow in human dignity? What can we do to overthrow unjust structures that prevent us from being images of God? And if the institutional Church does not provide us with the means to make our vision a reality, then we must invent new means of "spiritual community, celebration and action."[8]

It is important however, not to alienate ourselves from the historical institution of the Church. After all, our drawing room liturgy may be very meaningful, and our projects for social justice very effective, but it is larger social systems, like the Church, that will give our efforts ongoing life and meaning.[8] The parish will go on whether we are there or not, and unless we share our vision with our parishioners, we will have little lasting impact.

Tradition shows us that new movements of the Spirit, like the Benedictine movement, the charismatic movement, and liberation theology, have always begun at the 'grass roots' level. Only later have they been gathered into the institutional Church. This has given new life to the institutional Church, but in turn the institutional Church has given lasting historical impact to these new movements of the Spirit [8]

One must not forget also, that "the Catholic Church today finds itself in the unique position of being a major global institution that links the (one time) Communist, the Capitalist and the Third Worlds. It is therefore in a critical position to bridge these three worlds and to witness to gospel values."[8] From the women's point of view, the Church can be a powerful ally. Like the

Church, the women's movement is a global movement. It involves women from various social backgrounds, diverse cultures, and different economic classes. Their common platform is their womanhood Their common ambition, personhood.

In their collective search for justice, many women have discovered that the women's issue cannot be seen in isolation. They have uncovered patriarchy, or the will to dominate and control not only in the relationship between man and woman, but also in the relationships between "the rich and the poor, powerful cultures and weak cultures, the so-called developed world and the developing world, the strong and the weak, the human and the earth."[2] Feminists are challenging "these relationships to move beyond domination and subordination to mutuality and inclusiveness."[2] They are asking disturbing questions like. Who's rich, who's poor and why? Who decides, who benefits, who pays? These are questions that are being asked domestically, nationally and internationally They are questions that broaden the commitment of mutuality between women and men to include mutuality among all peoples and all nations

In the final analysis, feminism and the Church have common concerns — justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

If the Women's Movement wins, perhaps we all do.

REFERENCES

1 Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* of the Supreme Pontiff JOHN PAUL II on the "Dignity and Vocation of Women" on the occasion of the Marian Year (1988)

2 Maria RILEY, O P , *Transforming Feminism* London Sheed & Ward, 1989

3 Rita MONTEIRO in "Women and the Church in India " Unpublished

4 Jill SMOLOWE, "Where children come first" in *Time*, November 9, 1992, pp 48-49

5 Gloria STEINEM, "What it would be like if Women Win" in *Women's Liberation* edited by Michael E ADELSTEIN and Jean G PIVEL New York St Martin's Press, 1972

6 Rosemary Radford RUETHER, *Feminist Interpretation A Method of Correlation*

7 "LCWR Board Urges Change of Course," *Origins*, 14 40 (March 21, 1985), p 655

8 Rosemary Radford RUETHER, *Contemporary Roman Catholicism Crises and Challenges* Kansas City Sheed & Ward, 1987

9 Kari BORRESEN, quoted by Rosemary Radford RUETHER, "Christianity" in *Women in World Religions*

VJTR 58 (1994) 771-776

A Hindu Looks at Jesus

Anantanand RAMBACHAN

This is chapter 5 of the book *The Hindu Vision* published by Motilal Banarsidas Pub. Pvt Ltd, Delhi 1992 and reprinted in 1994 We print it here with the kind permission of the Publishers Dr Rambachan is a well-known Indologist now teaching in North America He first discovers the 'Hindu elements' in the life and spirituality of Jesus, and then the 'new' elements that challenge him to a re-reading of his tradition from the perspective of its relevance for our world He ends by relating the different approaches to the transcendence of the Divine Reality

Growing up in Trinidad, a small Caribbean island of ethnic, cultural, and religious pluralism, it seems inevitable that I should know of Jesus from a very young age I can easily recall participating in nativity plays at Christmas time in nursery school. As young boys, we used to attend the local Sunday School for the fun of it In fact, the church was located next to the house in which we lived at that time I can still vividly remember how elated I felt when I answered what seemed to be an incredibly difficult question This concerned the length of time Joseph knocked on the innkeeper's door the night Jesus was born The various answers kept coming for a long time. Some of the answers attempted to quantify the number of knocks, some sought to fix a specific length of time Suddenly, without thinking about it, I yelled, 'until the door was opened', and it was a kind of triumph. I think we were particularly attracted by and enjoyed the quiz at the end of each class

Christian missionaries regularly called at our home to talk to distribute literature. At Easter time most of the cinemas showed films on the life of Jesus, and we invariably went to one of these. In Trinidad there is the custom, on Good Friday, of building a hideous replica of Judas. This is displayed at the roadside, and at the end of the day it is thrashed and burnt. We would use the soft trunk of the banana plant to construct the body, fix branches into it for arms and legs, and stuff the clothing with dried banana leaves. It was really a time of great excitement for us.

In view of the fact that I came from an orthodox Hindu family, and both my grandfathers were Hindu priests, our par-

ticipation in these various activities appears quite strange. In Trinidad, however, the boundaries of participation in each other's major religious festivals and celebrations are not rigid, and it is quite fair to say that religious communities are well acquainted with each other's major symbols, figures and celebrations.

I received my secondary education at a Presbyterian college founded by Canadian missionaries, and here again there were many opportunities to hear of Jesus It was at this time that I started seriously to read literature on Hinduism. I turned particularly to the voluminous works of the Hindu monk Swami Vivekandanda, and here as in other writers the references to Jesus were many. Paradoxically, my interest in Jesus was encouraged and deepened by Hindu writers The interest of major Hindu figures of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Jesus also prompted me to read the New Testament

From the perspective and background of my own Hindu tradition, I did not find it difficult to identify with the figure of Jesus. In fact, I found him positively attractive Deeply attracted as I was at that time by the ideal of the Hindu *sannyāsin* (monk), I was able immediately to see in Jesus many of the qualities of this ideal Here was a wandering spiritual teacher without home or possessions, fired by the true spirit of renunciation (*vairagya*) Here also was one who spoke with authority about the limitations and futility of the life which was spent solely in the selfish accumulation of wealth (*artha*) and transitory sense enjoyment (*kāma*) Here also was one who taught about 'the kingdom of heaven within', and emphasized that there was a meaning and significance to life, and that it was possible on the basis of this to live in freedom, fullness and peace I found that the symbols and images, the parables and examples used by Jesus in talking about the spiritual life were not entirely different from those employed in some Hindu texts His emphasis on the primacy and fundamental nature of the spiritual life echoed for me the concern in the Upanisads with spiritual knowledge (*jñāna*) as the prerequisite to the full life.

> When men shall roll up space
> As though it were a piece of leather,
> Then will there be an end of sorrow
> For him who knew not God
>
> (*Svetāsvatara Upanisad* 6.16)

What, therefore, initially attracted me in the personality of Jesus is the embodiment in him of what I considered to be, from my Hindu viewpoint, the ideals and values of the authentic spiritual life. This dimension of Jesus has always continued to have a meaning and appeal for me. From my own very limited perspective of Christianity, I think that this primary aspect of the personality of Christ is not always sufficiently emphasized in presenting him. I imagine that it will always be difficult to present one who cared so little for the comforts and possessions which are usually the focus of our energies and aspirations, and whose life was so totally a reflection of its centre in a higher reality. As human beings, we have mastered the art of both subtly and nakedly using our respective spiritual traditions and ideals to mask and serve our own insatiable ego-centered ambitions. It seems hopeless when that which is meant to free us from the constraints of the ego becomes the servant of its narrow interests. But perhaps in its concern to stress the uniqueness and originality of Jesus, Christianity has ignored some of the identities in the definition of the spiritual life which Jesus shares with the tradition of Hinduism I think that it is the ready perception of these identities, however, which initially attracted outstanding Hindus like Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen, Vivekananda and Gandhi to Jesus The Hindu who is steeped in the values of his own tradition feels a natural affinity for the self-evident and radiant spirituality of Jesus, and wishes in the enthusiasm of this recognition to welcome him into his home.

Along with what I can only weakly describe as an authentic and self-manifesting spirituality, there is another dimension of the character of Jesus which I find meaningful and appealing. I would add that this dimension has become more significant and apparent to me in recent times In Hinduism we are very familiar with the idea that genuine spiritual knowledge cannot be imparted without an appropriate preparedness, readiness, and growth on the part of the receiver. In our quest for spiritual knowledge, newer and deeper dimensions of the same message are unfolded as we ourselves grow inwardly, and perhaps this is the case here. The dimension of Jesus' character of which I am referring is his outstanding demonstration of what genuine spirituality means in the process of actually living in the world. I think that he has provided some of the most concrete and finest examples of practical spirituality, or what the spiritual life means when it is

translated into human relationships. In his life he has given us some of the fullest instances of the fruits of the spiritual life in action. I find no difficulty, as a Hindu, in deriving guidance and inspiration from these, since I think that any authentic spirituality cannot but translate itself into this mode of relating, not only to human beings, but to all life.

In the context of this practical spirituality, I think, in particular, of the many examples of his spontaneous and limitless compassion. I think of his unconditional love, tenderness, and humility. I think also of his capacity for suffering and self-sacrifice, and his effortless forgiving. I have often reflected on the source of that boundless compassion which, even when life itself is being cruelly and painfully snatched away, choicelessly forgives. From what unfathomable depths of love such words flowed ... and how petty, trifling, and narrow we seem in the light of its splendour. If authentic spirituality is to bear any fruit, there is no doubt that it must consist of the qualities which were reflected in Jesus' relationships The source of a spirituality which is not characterized by an active compassion, unconditional love, gentleness, humility, self-sacrifice, and non-retribution must always be suspect and questionable

I find Jesus' emphasis on a living spirituality which informs and pervades all our relationships and even our smallest actions to be very meaningful The practical spirituality of Jesus is one of the important sources which has acted as a stimulus to the further exploration of my own tradition I have felt the necessity to ask more urgently of my own tradition its implications for life in society I feel the importance of trying to draw out from it the meaning of its vision when converted into the terms of daily living and the problems of human beings in societies. Any worthy claim about the nature of the Ultimate Reality must also be realized in terms of values and attitudes which contribute to the resolving of the fundamental conflicts and problems of our life in the world, and enable us to live peacefully and joyfully.

On the basis of reflecting in this direction on my own tradition, I feel very strongly that the fruits of Hindu spirituality, in terms of the attitudes and values which should guide our human relationships, coincide with those exemplified in the life of Jesus At the same time, I think that there is a need for contemporary Hinduism to seek more urgently to gather and emphasize the practical implications in society of its profound philosophical

views about the nature of the ultimate reality. Hinduism has evinced a great and no doubt legitimate concern with metaphysics, especially in those traditions which emphasize the importance of knowledge (*jñāna*) and the means of attaining spiritual freedom (*moksa*). This concern, however, always needs the corrective balance provided by a stress on its significance for our human relationships and our life in society. This stress is again needed in contemporary Hinduism if it is to make its own vital and unique contribution, along with other religious traditions, to resolving the complex problems of our modern world.

In the Upanisads, for example, the central concern is the attainment of *moksa* Moral and ethical values are presumed and implied rather than directly discussed *Moksa*, however, as an end which involves a certain vision of ourselves and the world, has profound implications for the transformation of our relationships, and the Upanisads entrust us with the task of seeking out this fruit and creatively applying it in our lives The actual and vivid examples of Jesus, and my contact with his followers, have intensified my awareness of the necessity and importance of this. This is not to suggest, however, that such values are never directly discussed The Brhadāranyaka Upanisad 5 2 1-3, for example, enjoins upon us the values of self-restraint (*dama*), giving (*dāna*), and compassion. In a text like the Bhagavadgītā, the references are more direct Among the values mentioned there, both as a means to the authentic spiritual life and as the fruit of this life, are compassion (*karunā*), humility (*amānitvam*), sharing (*dāna*), gentleness (*mārdavam*), forgiveness (*ksamā*), modesty (*hrī*) harmlessness (*ahimsā*), purity (*saucam*), fearlessness (*abhayam*), patience (*ksānti*), serenity (*sānti*), and freedom from egoism (*nirahamkāra*) — [12 13-19; 13.7-11; 16 1-3] These are undoubtedly among the important values emphasized and exemplified in the life of Jesus.

This coincidence in the values of the authentic spiritual life is an area for further mutual exploration between our respective traditions, and a basis on which our traditions can act together. We need to understand more closely how we interpret these values and the ways in which they ought to be reflected in our life in the world As a Hindu, one has to resist the inclination to see and interpret Jesus in the categories of Hinduism. This approach was very common in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and it is not unusual today The attempt is often made

to see his life and teachings in the categories of the Hindu tradition of *advaita* (non-dualism). This, however, is only possible through a very selective use of the records of his sayings, and the dismissal of the way in which he has been traditionally understood by most Christians. It is an approach which claims to place little importance on dogma and doctrine, and, therefore, dismisses the significance of differences in this sphere. In reality, however, such differences must be acknowledged. Dismissing them in sweeping generalizations does not contribute much to the process of mutual understanding.

At the other end, however, we can intensify the emphasis on our differences and overlook or explain away all coincidences. To many who are acquainted with both traditions, the identities which are argued for here may appear to be insignificantly obvious But a sharing between two traditions about the cardinal values which constitute the spiritual life, and which should light up our conduct in the world, can never be without significance These are not the peripheral concerns of any religion, but may be said to lie at the very heart of their meaning

There remains the challenging and compelling fact that on the basis of very different 'readings', 'interpretations', or 'responses' to the Ultimate Reality and the human predicament, there is a certain vital coincidence about the values of authentic spirituality This cannot but hold some meaning, and the suggestions and implications of this meaning will have to be considered by our traditions individually and jointly Here I can only think of a few of the innumerable questions Does it mean that there are different ways of 'reading' the same Reality, and that our traditions are employing one or the other of these standpoints? Are these standpoints incompatible, and, if so, where does this incompatibility lie? Can different standpoints in some way complement each other? And does it imply that all our categories and standpoints are in some way limited and partial, and that the Reality we are 'reading' ultimately transcends them all?

VJTR 59 (1995) 777-782

Jesuit Educational Thought: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Evaluation

Robert SLATTERY, S.J.

After a long experience of school teaching in Bihar Fr Slattery is since January 1994 the Secretary of the Jesuit Education Association (JEA) of India (225, Jor Bagh, New Delhi 110 003) In this lecture delivered in March 1994 he recalls the sources of the Jesuit educational policy and shows its present orientation to an all-round development focused on the education of the freedom of the student in his or her drive for human rather than merely academic excellence The implications of this philosophy for the syllabus, the pedagogy and evaluation methods of the school are still being worked out

Source of the Jesuit Educational Thought

One's educational philosophy springs from what meaning one gives to the world and one's relation to it, to fellow human beings and to God. The Jesuit society, running educational institutions in 70 countries and with schools founded in India as early as 1542, and at present educating about 2,50,000 students in India alone, has an educational philosophy springing from its founder Ignatius Loyola's world vision and how through the ages Jesuits understood that vision in the changing circumstances of time and place Ignatius Loyola best expressed that vision in his *Spiritual Exercises* published over 450 years ago After his death, *The Way of Studies*, putting that vision into guidelines for Jesuit schools, was published in 1586 Four hundred years later, in 1986, this was updated with *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education*, and in 1993, *Ignatian Pedagogy, A Practical Approach* was published to help the teacher in the classroom to put the educational philosophy of the 1986 document into practice.

Loyola's World Vision

Ignatius Loyola's world vision can be very briefly summarised as follows:

(i) All things have been created by God and are good. People have the freedom to use them or misuse them. God shapes history through human beings

(ii) We are called to see the world as a mirror of God's beauty, love and activity However, due to our misuse of freedom, the world shows us a mixed picture of love and hate, of war and peace, of riches and poverty, of concern and compassion, of truth and falsehood

(iii) All human beings are brothers and sisters, children of the one God Their fulfillment comes from service of one another, and especially of the poor and marginalised

Such a vision is deceptively simple but the educational philosophy that flows from it, while appearing to be very ordinary, is not generally acceptable when analysed In brief, it says

(i) *The all round development* of the human person is a critical element in Jesuit education

(ii) *The proper use of freedom* is a key to the full development both of the human person and his/her world

(iii) *Human excellence* is the primary aim of Jesuit education, i e , the formation of a person who will be a leader in the service of others, especially those who are poor and oppressed The primary aim of Jesuit schools is not academic achievement nor academic excellence All Jesuit schools, whether they educate the rich or the poor, must make all decisions having the good of the poor in mind

Let us look at these three elements in so far as they concern the curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation

All Round Development

All round development is put forward by every school teacher as the aim of a school but when the syllabus is analysed in the light of Gardiner's theory of Multiple Intelligences (a modern interpretation of different talents), the heavy stress is on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, much less stress on visual-spatial, musical and body-kinesthetic, and very little on intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences In fact, when it comes to the last two, intrapersonal and interpersonal, which are critical for a happy, fulfilled life, there is little direct attention given Usually, all round development narrows down to cognitive skills, and of the six cognitive educational objectives in Bloom's taxonomy, the greatest importance in schools is given to

knowledge, i.e , to recall, to remembering, the lowest cognitive skill And with the knowledge explosion in this computer age, recall of facts will be of little value in the 21st century employment market When it comes to national imperatives for education, acceptance of one's own culture with an appreciation of the culture of others is connected not with memory but with intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, both at the cognitive and the affective levels

Imaginative, Creative and Affective Dimensions

All round development includes the imaginative, creative and affective dimensions of each student Yet these get a minimal mention in any syllabus If they are in some way included, it is in the area of co-curriculars, which of course the student therefore relegates to the unimportant Curriculum is a wider term than syllabus as it includes all the learning experiences of the student in the school, whether in or outside the classroom, whether in activities organised by the school or from the total school climate And through the overall curriculum, in better schools, all round development is encouraged in many ways. But for many schools, either there is a lack of precise objectives from the concerned Board of Education, or these objectives are not translated into practical guidelines by the school authorities. This means that all round development is merely a dream in most schools

A New Class Lesson Plan Model

All round development depends not only on the curriculum but also on the way the teacher teaches Ignatian pedagogy translates Jesuit educational philosophy into practice for the teacher in the classroom, evolving a new class lesson plan model of context, experience, reflection, action, evaluation, whereby all round development of the student is brought about through the teaching of any subject The stress is on giving the student a fuller cognitive and affective learning experience, and developing a critical sense to reflect on one's own and others' experiences

Need To Give a Greater Choice of Subjects

All round development does not mean that each student can develop each talent to the same degree. She is meant to be helped

to develop her potential to the utmost But this should mean that she should be given more time and encouragement in the areas where she has greater talent *This is the great weakness of the present syllabus.* There is a great lack of choice right up to standard 10, possibly because all round development has been wrongly understood. Why should all students up to class 10 do a number of compulsory subjects, and those subjects only concerned with two intelligences, the linguistic and the logical-mathematical? Why force students to go through the agony of studying subjects which are not their strong ones, which are gateways to a university course they will never do? Why? Will boards like the ICSE have the courage to face this fallacy, get rid of all compulsory subjects except those demanded by the three language formula, and offer choices which will be concerned with the visual spatial, musical, body-kinesthetic, inter-personal and intrapersonal intelligences? If it does lead the way in this, it will make learning much more joyful and creative for many more students

Education to Freedom

The second important educational outcome of the Jesuit world vision is education to freedom. This is not so much connected with what subject is taught but with how the subject is taught It is especially connected with the informal curriculum, the discipline and climate of the school, the formation of attitudes, the formation of a habit of reflection before acting It is concerned with the freedom to judge without prejudices, to empathise with others, especially those different from oneself It aims at forming a critical sense to ensure freedom for the student from inner constraints like greed and consumerism for the better off, and a poor self-image for the poor A subject concerned with media and communications would be an important starting point for developing such a critical sense

Human Excellence

The third practical element of Jesuit educational philosophy is its aim of human excellence, forming a person who will be a man or woman for others, a leader in service This does not mean that the academic side will be neglected But the stress will be on those areas which develop the interpersonal skills, and the methodology used will be cooperation rather than competition, a cooperative learning approach to subjects Of course, when we

are dealing with formation for leadership in service, we are into the value area, *the character area*, and in a world that stresses competition and academic success as the road to economic advancement and the key to happiness, the school climate and the methodology of teaching will be the main means towards formation of leaders in service rather than specific subjects, though certain topics should be treated that create awareness and openness in students

Evaluation

Jesuit educational philosophy has important implications for the evaluation of the pupil, both daily and in various examinations If the aim is all round development, then in the lower classes the subjects will be based on the 7 multiple intelligences and will also stress the affective, imaginative and creative areas So both the day-to-day activities of teachers in the classroom, and the terminal and annual examination, or unit tests, will cover these Open most textbooks, and look at the questions at the end of chapters and especially examples of unit tests What do you find? The questions, in 95% of the cases, test a student's memory, with all the answers found in the chapter of the book. What we test is a sign of what we teach, of what is important. We have been caught badly in the objective type tests, in the only one answer approach, which is crippling our student's creativity, affectivity, imagination

As we reach the higher classes, we need to move to a greater freedom of choice of subjects, but again evaluating the range of intellectual and affective skills Finally, evaluation, if it is to be in accordance with the aim of human excellence and not academic excellence (actually most schools evaluate academic achievement, not academic ability, thus prejudicing the merits/demerits of reservation policies), then evaluation must be primarily of human excellence, of those values that stamp a person as a good citizen, a good community person, a concerned, caring person, a person at home with one's own culture but open to other cultures, an Indian proud of one's country, but open to international values Not an easy task! But a very necessary one! Because evaluation reports to parents/students tell them what the school considers important. And no amount of notices, of assembly speeches, of exhortations to good behaviour will carry much weight if the real message of what matters is conveyed by the

evaluation, i.e., academic achievement is the real concern of the school.

Conclusion

Summing up, educational philosophy is based on a vision of the world as God's creation, of man/woman as a free child of God, and of all persons as brothers and sisters, and yet of a world which in actual fact does not mirror God so well because human freedom is resulting in hate as well as love, war as well as peace, injustice as well as justice Based on this vision, Jesuit education aims at developing the full potential of God's world, a green world, a just and peaceful world, by developing people to the fullness of their potential, men and women of conscience, competence and compassionate commitment to others

Translated into practice in the school, it proposes

(i) A syllabus that really fosters all round intellectual, affective, moral, spiritual development, not just linguistic, logical-mathematical skills And as the student moves into the high school, a syllabus to enable the student to develop his/her own special talents, with an absolute minimum of compulsory subjects

(ii) A pedagogy that accompanies the student in growth, enables the student to learn on his own, and gives the teacher the skills to propose human values through the teaching of the ordinary subjects

(iii) An approach to evaluation which stresses the need to assess human excellence on a higher priority than purely academic excellence, and to move away from an evaluation system that evaluates not academic ability but academic achievement, and even worse a system that considers academic achievement as mainly remembering facts, reproducing what the teacher has taught, or is in the textbook

I propose that this approach to education, if put in practice, will slowly give to our country people whose full potential is developed and creative competent people, but, most important of all, people who really care for others Only with such people of competence, conscience, and compassionate commitment, can the forces of division, of prejudice, of poverty and injustice be tackled so that India will be able to enter the twenty-first century a modern, humane, united country, rooted in its own culture

VJTR 58 (1994) 783-790

Let Us be Heard among the Voices

Jojo M. FUNG, S.J.

The awakening of the tribal world has been accelerated since the celebration in 1993 of the International Year of the Indigenous Peoples This article gives some insights into the rising consciousness among the tribals of Malaysia and what the Church can do in that situation It may also suggest lines of reflection and action for the Church in India and elsewhere The Malaysian author is at present completing his studies in the Jesuit School of Theology (Claver House, 2601 LeConte Avenue, Berkeley, California 94709-1097, USA)

The International Year of the Indigenous Peoples in 1993 generated considerable discussion on the plight of the tribal people in Malaysia Many have spoken on their behalf. The Orang Asli themselves, as they are known in Peninsular Malaysia, have made themselves heard The media has made their aspirations known to the Malaysian public Among other voices are those of the academicians and the NGOs

My contention is that it is opportune for the Malaysian Church to make herself heard, too, among those voices By hearing what the Church has to say, the public may become further convinced that she lives by what she preaches the preaching of the Gospel is inseparable from seeking justice on behalf of our Orang Asli Before the Church speaks, it will be important for her to be acquainted with the issues addressed by others so that she knows how to contribute to the discussion and respond to the plight of the Orang Asli In the first section, I will attempt to highlight the issues brought up by the academicians and the NGOs in a one-day colloquium In the second section I will present the aspirations of the Orang Asli as articulated by themselves in the recent international seminar held in Kuala Lumpur In the last section, I will propose two ways by which the Church can contribute to the moral discourse on the rights of the Orang Asli in Malaysia

I. The One-Day Colloquium

The academic community has heightened the awareness among Malaysians of the plight of the Orang Asli through the one-day

colloquium [1] An associate professor of the University of Malaya pointed out that the Orang Asli are still being regarded "incomplete citizens."[2] He further added that though they have the right to vote, they have been subjected to different sets of laws and policies. According to Lim Heng Seng's paper entitled "Vision 2020: Law, Justice and the Orang Asli," they are still not given the preferential status enjoyed by the Malays, the natives of Sabah and Sarawak This is most lamentable as the Constitution has authorized the Government to enact laws in their favour so long as the legal provisions are for their protection, well-being and advancement. Seng subscribes to the general opinion of the colloquium that the structure of laws, policies and institutions has failed in upholding the welfare of the Orang Asli [3]

The Orang Asli are also subjected to other threats Foremost among them is the loss of their traditional land They are either plundered or annexed by the developers or the government for logging, tin-mining, developing estate agricultural schemes and the construction of modern infrastructures such as hydro-electric dams, highways, tourist resorts, and, latest, the new international airport These activities in the name of development have systematically eroded their subsistence base Of what is due to them in terms of a total acreage of 134,980 ha of reserved lands which the JHEOA has requested of the State Governments, only 15,693 ha have been gazetted as of 1981 [4] In spite of the various five-year plans, the Economic Planning Unit has indicated that 80% of the Orang Asli still belonged to the extreme poverty group They earn a monthly income of less than RM 175 for each household [5]

Thus far a strategy of a single but multifunctional agency has been adopted in contrast with the inter-ministerial approach exercised by the Federal Cabinet and undertaken by the different departments, statutory bodies and agencies[6] on behalf of the

[1] This event was held in September 1992 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in honour of the International Year of Indigenous Peoples It was organized by the National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) and the Consortium of the Indigenous Peoples Association of Malaysia (Konsortium Orang Asli [M] BHD) The event was carried by *Star* and *New Straits Time*, two of the major newspapers in Malaysia, October 19, 1993

[2] *New Straits Time*, September 13, 1993, p 30

[3] *Ibid*

[4] *Ibid* JHEOA stands for *Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli*, i e, the Department of Orang Asli Affairs

[5] *Sunday Star*, November 28, 1993, p. 19 RM 175 is equivalent to US $ 79 50

[6] *New Straits Time*, November 30, 1993, p 30

Bumiputeras.[7] The former approach is flawed with paternalism, creating overdependency among the Orang Asli.

The NGOs have voiced their concern regarding the interaction of the Orang Asli with modern society. This cultural exchange is producing a gradual erosion of the indigenous social order. As Colin Nicholas has pointed out, the dominance of the capitalist society is so pervasive that it first disintegrates and then reorganizes the indigenous social order.[8] According to Clammer's study the impact of modernisation through the mass media has created artificial needs among the Orang Asli. They experience religious and cultural changes, and suffer a loss of the traditional tribal values Seeking jobs and better living facilities, the young are lured away into estates and towns Prostitution in search of quick monetary gain is not uncommon among younger Orang Asli women [9]

The Malaysian Charter on Human Rights[10] formulated by the NGOs affirms the entitlement of the indigenous peoples to self-determination It further highlights their natural and inalienable right to retain and control the land and all resources found in their traditional territories, and the right to determine their own way of life They further possess the rights to practice and develop their culture and religion and to maintain their cultural identity They have the right to be provided with ample opportunities for material progress The joint declaration entitled "On The Rights of The Indigenous Peoples of Sarawak, Sabah And Peninsular Malaysia"[11] spelt out clearly their rights to (1) retain traditional lands, (2) educate their children in their history, culture, language, beliefs and traditional knowledge, (3) develop their own languages, (4) practice and develop their customs and cultures, (5) determine and control the traditional system of justice, (6) practice and develop traditional beliefs, (7) continue with their given subsistent economy, (8) participate in the nation's development, (9) establish their own associations and affiliate with other organizations

[7]This is a term in Malaysian which means children of the soil

[8]Colin NICHOLAS, "Indigenous Peoples and the Dominant Society," *Aliran Monthly*, 1993 13, p 18

[9]John CLAMMER, "Incorporation and Assimilation The Aboriginal Peoples in Malaysia and Forces of Modernization," *Journal of Social and Economics Studies*, n.s , 4/2 (1987), p 139

[10]In response to the Government's allegations that the language of human rights is Western, the Malaysian NGOs have worked out their own Charter of Human Rights See *Aliran Monthly* 13 (May 1993), pp 27-30

[11]*Aliran Monthly* 13 (1993), p 39

II. International Seminar on Indigenous Peoples

Subsequently, in the November-December 1993 International Seminar on Indigenous People,[12] the ethnic and political aspirations of the Orang Asli were systematically presented as an alternative social project for consideration by the Malaysian Government.[13] In highlighting the situation of the Orang Asli today, the joint paper of Tony Williams-Hunt and Hasan Mat Nor made efforts to "historicize" the Orang Asli as the first inhabitants of the land. With regard to their future, the paper proposed guidelines which called on the Government to formulate effective policies. These must aim at bringing the Orang Asli on par with fellow Malaysians by the year 2020. By then they will become a vital ethnic component of the total social fabric of multicultural Malaysia.

As a leading spokesperson for the Orang Asli, Williams-Hunt stressed that a new relationship with the wider society based on respect, cooperation and freedom needs to be fostered.[14] The Orang Asli should be treated as equals and partners, or neighbours and workmates of our society, who have the right and duty to contribute to the process of nation-building.[15] Williams-Hunt called on the Government to bring about the constitutional and structural reforms in the laws, policies and institutions that significantly affect the administration of the Orang Asli. This meant granting constitutional recognition of their special position as the earliest inhabitants of the land. Their land rights should be recognized and protected immediately. Finally, affirmative action must be taken to rectify the injustices suffered by them.[16]

He further urged the Government to step up measures to enable the Orang Asli to secure their livelihood, renew the tradition of self-reliance, reduce their dependency on the dominant

[12]The Seminar was sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism. It was held from November 29-December 1, 1993 in conjunction with the International Year of the Indigenous People. The Seminar was entitled *Indigenous People: The Way Forward*.

[13]The aspirations of the Orang Asli were presented in a paper presented by Tony WILLIAMS-HUNT and Hasan MAT NOR, "The Orang Asli of Malaysia in the Wider National Order: Forging New and Dynamic Relationships." Kuala Lumpur 1993.

[14]*Star*, November 30, 1993, p. 4.

[15]WILLIAMS-HUNT and MAT NOR, "The Orang Asli of Malaysia in the Wider National Order," p. 15.

[16]*Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

political structure, provide a basis for development from within, and expedite access to social power. The Orang Asli must be given the right to self-determination in solving their structural problems They must take charge of the development in their own society. They should be given greater participation in the JHOEA and be appointed or elected to fuller representation in politics and the Government of the country Last of all, a socio-cultural and psychological climate should be promoted in Malaysia so that they are regarded on equal footing with other Malaysians In the spirit of mutuality and partnership, they should be considered as contributors toward the building of our nation [17]

III. The Contribution of the Local Church

The contribution of the local Church in a multi-religious Malaysia consists of providing the public socio-ethical discourse with a basis drawn from the traditions of the world religions This means dialogue and needs to be consensual in approach The moral claims of the academicians, NGOs and the Orang Asli must be substantiated by the consensual teachings on religious universals Suffice it to give as an example the teachings on the *humanum* found in Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism.

Islam advocates that God has given human dignity[18] and human rights[19] as gifts to the human beings God has attributed an absolute value to the human person[20] by virtue of the covenantal relationship with God and because the individual is a microcosm of the whole humankind [21] Christianity regards the human person as created by God as *Imago Dei* to enjoy a covenantal relationship with God. Humanity was definitively renewed through the redemptive event in Jesus This then is ground for the transcendental value, the inviolable dignity and the source of

[17] *Ibid*, pp 18-20

[18] Rashid Ahmad JULLUNDHRI, "Human Rights and Islam," in *Understanding Human Rights An Interdisciplinary and Interfaith Study*, ed Alan D FALCONER Dublin Irish School of Ecumenics, 1980, p 34, *Faith in Human Rights Support in Religious Traditions for a Global Struggle*, ed Robert TRAER Washington, D C Georgetown University Press, 1991, p 113

[19] Abul A'la MAWDUDI, *Human Rights in Islam*, 2nd ed Leicester Islamic Foundation, 1980, p 15, *Faith in Human Rights*, p 116

[20] *Faith in Human Rights*, p 114

[21] Riffat HASSAN, "On Human Rights and the Qur'anic Perspective," in *Human Rights In Religious Tradition*, ed Arlene SWIDLER New York The Pilgrim Press, 1982, p 55, *Faith in Human Rights*, p 119

the rights of the human person.[22]

In Hinduism, the Bhagavad-Gita advocates that all *humanum* "are equal as God's creation but are not the same" in social status, and human rights should be promoted "on the basis of all human beings having the same essence."[23] Buddhism, however, regards human rights as ancillary to human nature[24] which is an integral part of the whole process of "relational origination"[25] that brings about the existence of all transient beings, sentient and nonsentient, in the earth community.[26] Therefore, when life is interconnected, human dignity becomes a relational reality and must be safeguarded by the promotion of human rights as a condition to bring about a society of equals.[27] Indeed, this contribution will truly enrich the current moral discourse by giving due recognition to the universals in the world religions which unequivocally uphold the transcendental value of the humanity of the Orang Asli in Malaysia.

The Orang Asli have been subjected to what Henry Shue termed as "systemic and systematic violation"[28] which tantamounts to, in the words of Nancy Seufert-Barr, "being civilized to extinction" in the attempt of the nation to assimilate them.[29] Because of their vulnerability as a morally deprived people, the Malaysian

[22] "Introduction," in *Human Rights A Challenge to Theology* Rome CCIA and IDOC International, 1983, pp 10-11, *Faith in Human Rights*, p 88

[23] Kana MITRA, "Human Rights in Hinduism," in *Human Rights in Religious Traditions*, pp 80-81, *Faith in Human Rights*, p 130

[24] Kenneth K INADA, "The Buddhist Perspective on Human Rights," in *Human Rights in Religious Traditions*, p 70, *Faith in Human Rights*, 135

[25] *Ibid* "Relational Origination" is a central Buddhist doctrine that states "In any life-process, the arising of an experiential event is a total, relational affair A particular event does not arise in a vacuum, nor does it result by the imposition of external forces of elements It is a unique arisal which is vitally dependent on or related to all the elements present within the surroundings Thus, in the process there is nothing which is fragmentary or has any gaps, since it relates with the complete fullness of all the elements present Each relationship is full insofar as the process is concerned This means that relational origination is a most concrete way in which life-process goes on" (Kenneth K INADA, "The Buddhist Perspective on Human Rights," in *Human Rights in Religious Traditions*, p 70, *Faith in Human Rights*, pp 135-136)

[26] Masao ABE, "Religious Tolerance and Human Rights A Buddhist Perspective," in *Religious Liberty and Human Rights in Nations and in Religions*, ed Leonard SWIDLER Philadelphia Ecumenical Press, Temple University, 1986, p 202, *Faith in Human Rights*, p 134

[27] *Faiths in Human Rights*, p 137

[28] Henry SHUE, *Basic Rights Subsistence, Affluence, and U S Foreign Policy* New Jersey Princeton University Press, 1980, p 47

[29] Nancy SEUFERT-BARR, "Seeking a New Partnership," in *UN Chronicle*, June 1993, p 40

Church must call on all agents to respect the communal survival rights of our Orang Asli. The Church's action on behalf of the communal rights of the Orang Asli must be carried out, as Bay wisely pointed out, "not because they are indigenous, but because they are human beings with indigenous cultures, and with unique ways of being human."[30] As they are still the poorest of the poor in our nation, the Church has to advocate their communal right to a differential juridical and material entitlement since they are the worst bearers of the moral tragedies of the current development in the country.[31] Such entitlement to both preferential policies and social goods, according to Hollenbach's priority principles, has to take precedence over the needs of those who are better off than them in our society.[32] Such measures will bring our Orang Asli abreast of our fellow Malaysians in the actual enjoyment of goods, as we progress toward the realization of Vision 2020.[33]

The communal survival rights are the moral rights of this tragic people, and the Church has to spell out and defend the correlative collective duties, on behalf of our Orang Asli.[34] As Shue so forcefully argued, the respondents charged with the corresponding duties must collectively guarantee not only not to further deprive the Orang Asli but to protect them against future threats of deprivation. Last not but not least, the respondents must assist them so that they can attain a better standard of living as the nation develops.

Besides the existing Department of Orang Asli Affairs, the concerned academicians and the consortium of NGOs, the other identifiable social guarantors of the communal survival rights of the Orang Asli are the Cabinet, the various Ministries (for instance, Education, Health, Development and Primary Resources), statutory bodies and multi-development cooperations. All

[30]Christian BAY, "Human Rights on the Periphery: No Room in the Ark of the Yanomami?" in *Human Rights in the World Community: Issues and Action*, 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Press, 1992, p. 126.

[31]William O'NEIL, "No Amnesty For Sorrow: The Privilege of the Poor in Christian Social Ethics," Berkeley: Jesuit School of Theology, 1993, an unpublished paper, p. 15.

[32]David HOLLENBACH, *Claims In Conflicts: Retrieving and Renewing the Catholic Human Rights Tradition*. New York: Paulist Press, 1979, pp. 204-207.

[33]It is a vision by which Malaysia will become a fully developed nation by the year 2020.

[34]This is based on Shue's definition of a moral right. See *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 13.

these agencies have the correlative collective duties to respond to the communal survival rights enshrined in the joint declaration "On The Rights Of The Indigenous Peoples of Sarawak, Sabah And Peninsular Malaysia "[35]

For instance, these social guarantors have the collective duty to protect, to assist and to guarantee the actual enjoyment of their rights to (1) have their traditional lands, (2) educate their children in their history, culture, language, beliefs and traditional knowledge, (3) develop their own languages, (4) practice and develop their customs and cultures, (5) determined and control the traditional system of justice, (6) practice and develop their traditional beliefs,(7) continue with their given subsistent economy (8), participate in the nation's development, (9) establish their own associations and affiliate with other organizations Ultimately, the Church must urge all parties to totally reject any trade-off of Orang Asli's rights for economic benefits and work toward a critical and creative participation of our Orang Asli as moral agents of their own development and well-being [36]

Conclusion

The cultural erosion and incessant deprivation of the Orang Asli is detrimental to the fabric of Malaysia's multicultural society Their deplorable plight calls for an ongoing debate aimed at the establishment of their fundamental survival rights Their communal rights will give them and their children the moral justification to press for their demands that the country's social agencies fulfil their correlative collective duties Given the recent voices of the academicians, the NGOs and the Orang Asli themselves, the Church too must join in the many voices that call on all governmental and other social guarantors to collaborate concertedly in the further fulfilment of our Orang Asli's rights Indeed a new partnership based on mutual respect and understanding is our challenge in the coming decades as we develop our nation -

[35] *Aliran Monthly*, 13 (1993), p 39

[36] Donal DORR, *Option For The Poor A Hunured Years Of Catholic Social Teaching* New York Orbis Books, 1992, pp 346-347 Also see JOHN PAUL II, *Centisimus Annus*, no 58, in *Catholic Social Teaching The Documentary Heritage*, ed , David J O'BRIAN and Thomas A SHANNON New York Orbis Books, 1992

VJTR 58 (1994) 791-794

Lights from the Field

The Family and the Church

To give to the Word of God a human presence is the mission of the Church.[1] It is a task to which the family is well suited. Enfolding the defenceless babe within its womb, nurturing vulnerable children into adulthood, embracing the human person with all its weaknesses, the family is our experience of God made flesh

God Experience

As co-creators, parents are entrusted with human life in all its frailty They are expected to stand in for God, offering love, care and protection They are in fact, the only "God" a baby knows So much so, that a child will leap into the air with gay abandon, confident that Papa will hold her — just like God, when we "let go" in faith And Mama will be expected to mend everything from torn books to broken limbs in much the same way that we expect God to work miracles But the most poignant expression of faith in God is perhaps the relationship of a mother or father with their mentally or physically handicapped child. Truly then does one see God in person

As a child grows, her concept of God is still very much linked with relationship with her parents With their lives parents help to define God God forgives, God punishes, God is generous, God is kind, God is cruel, all according to whether Mummy and Daddy are loving or harsh. Often these are images we carry with us throughout life, making it easy or difficult, depending on our experience, to relate to the God of Scripture. It is an awesome responsibility, one few of us, parents, are conscious of.

It is little children, however, who unfailingly make God present. Look at the smile of a child Feel his soft body warm against your skin Watch as he learns to recognise, to walk, to interact with his

[1] J Neuner, "Listen to the Spirit" in *VJTR* 58/2 February 1994, p 119

environment. Listen as he says his first recognisable word. Take pleasure in his antics And without fail you will experience the warmth of the God who gives us life. You will wonder at the Creator who has fashioned such a "perfect being." You will know that God still loves the world (Tagore).

Children also have a delightful way of adding a new perspective to religious truths, like receiving Jesus, the food of life. Sitting with three-and-a-half-year old Nivedita one late morning I said, "C'mon Nivedita, say your prayers fast It's late. God is waiting for you It's time to eat lunch. She's feeling hungry." "Prayers is Her *khanna*?" she immediately asked That took me by surprise, but I said, "Yes " So the morning prayers were duly said Then she turned to me and asked "Now She got more *khanna*?" And I could see God there, smilingly chewing on Her 'food'!

Family Prayer

When it comes to passing on the faith, one responsibility most parents are aware of is the need for prayer Introducing children to God is one of the special pleasures of family life. Joining my daughters in their morning prayers, for instance, is a privilege I never want to miss Wrapped in bath towels, they settle themselves in my lap and invite their "Gentle God, warm and kind," into their lives Sometimes they breathe the prayer into my neck, other times they say it silently, insisting "but God heard," some times they break into song, and sometimes we pray for each other —" look upon my mummy your lovely child, teach her how to work and play, be Thou with her throughout the day " I can't think of a better way to start my day

At night we sit together reciting prayers that continue to inspire countless generations, and share a laugh with God, as my two-and-a-half-year old prays "Lead us from death to immorality"! She has made it the "Nivedita" Mantra After all, why should only her sister Gayatri have one? Some day I hope she will come alive to the beauty of that simple prayer The high point is our prayer of thanksgiving "What good thing happened to you today?" "Mummy brought me *kajal*"! "*Dadi* and Pratiksha *Kaki* came to our house " "Surgery went well today " "Ashutosh is finally eating something " And we all thank God Even a routine examination of conscience becomes a response to God's love "Jesus, tomorrow I'll listen to mummy, okay?" or "Tell God

you'll never beat Nivi again!"

Calling on God has become a habit: "God, let me find my ear-ring!" pleads Gayatri. "When I become big I'll pray for God to make me be a mummy!" prays Nivedita. God is with us as we struggle through crises or celebrate various occasions. She reaches out with forgiveness, and listens as we expose our hearts' desires. In fact, God has become a very real presence. Real enough for Nivedita to hold out her hands to me and say, "Here, take God. Put It in your heart!" Coming alive to God, this is a vital part of being "Church."

The Church's Motherhood

As a witness of the Church's motherhood (*Familiaris Consortio*, 49), the Christian family is also called upon, in a special way, to make present Christ's love. As such, it must be responsible not only for formation but also transformation.

Leading this life-giving crusade is the Christian Woman. From her service in the family flows service to the community, inspiring vocations and involvement in social concerns. Her care for each member of the family instils a respect for the human person; her efforts at reconciliation create ripples that can influence the wider movement for global peace; her compassion for the poor and the powerless sows the seeds of the struggles for justice. We need the woman's closeness to life and nature to protect the integrity of creation; we need her encouraging and inclusive spirit to provide an alternative to patriarchal domination and control; we need her feminine perspective in the political arena to support and defend the rights and duties of the family. We need her great capacity for love to feminize the Church.[2]

Challenges of the Family

As a domestic church, the family's biggest challenge today is to live out gospel values in the face of the dehumanizing trends in society. Like Christ it must defend honesty, self-giving and service in a society that propagates corruption, self-indulgence and consumerism. It must forge strong family bonds, for only the stability and security of the family can combat social ills like irresponsible sex, violence and chemical abuse. It must respect

[2]Cf. *ibid.*, specially pp. 120-1.

women in the family by not only ensuring them education and property rights, but also by encouraging men to forgo their privileges and challenge existing patriarchal norms. It must dispense with communal prejudices and fundamentalism that lead to disharmony, and concentrate instead on the human person created in the image of God. It must bring hope in a bleeding world.

If the family is to live on a universal scale, however, we must learn to see ourselves as human beings sharing a common humanity:

> Whatever your condition in life do not let yourself be imprisoned in the narrow circle of your small family Once and for all accept the human family Be careful not to feel a stranger in any part of the world Let no problem, whatever peoples it involves, leave you indifferent. Vibrate with the joy and hope of every group Take on as your own the sufferings and humiliations of your sisters and brothers in humanity (*Bishop Dom Helder Camara*)

Only then can we stand as authentic signs of the "Catholic" Church.

Mandala, Bombay 400088 **Dr Astrid Lobo GAJIWALA**

A New Theological Journal for India

The Ecumenical Christian Centre, Post Bag 11, Whitefield, Bangalore 560066, has started *Theology for Our Times*, under the editorship of T K Thomas, former editor of *The Ecumenical Review* The first issue of 80 pages came out in June 1994. Its focus is "contextual theology" with contributions from J R Narcison, Mercy Oduyoye (African Feminism), M. P Joseph (Liberation Theology in L America), J. Russell Chandran (Secular State), J. Pathrapankal (Bible and Religious Pluralism) and G. Dietrich (on the life and martyrdom of TU leader Shankar Guha Niyogi). It also has Book Reviews and three Seminar Statements We wish the new venture a successful future and look forward to a powerful inspiration for a more contextual theology.

VJTR 58 (1994) 795-807

Review Article

From Catholic Theology to Sankara Vedānta and Return with Fr F.X. Clooney[1]

Fr Francis Xavier Clooney, Dpt. of Theology, Boston College, is a rare sort of Catholic theologian: an American Jesuit, he has worked in Nepal and India, studied both Sanskrit and Tamil, explored much of Pûrva Mîmāmsā, Vedānta, Srî Vaisnavism and also of the writings of the Jesuit pioneers of the 17th-18th cent. in South India and produced important studies on such salient figures as Jaimini, Sankara, Roberto de Nobili and Satakopan, the poet of Tiruvaymoli. Those studies have been devoted chiefly to the methods and contents of the commentarial literature of India and he has found in it a solid anchoring for a fruitful Comparative Theology

In 1926, Mircea Eliade, then a 19-year old student wrote to the already well-known Raffaele Pettazzoni, asking him the radical question. "Does the History of Religions make sense? Has it a sense?" They went on discussing that by letters all along 33 years.[2] A similar question deserves to be put. "Does Comparative Theology make sense?" In 1953, when I was vindicating the fact that the method of Sankara was exclusively commentarial (a fact wilfully ignored by Radhakrishnan and other modernistic Indian professors) I called this method "theological," thus hinting that comparative theology might be fruitful and meaningful. When, however, I devoted one chapter of my Ph.D dissertation to a formal analysis of the polysemy of terms-in-context as familiar to Jaimini and Sankara as much as to Thomas Aquinas and other medieval theologians, my Gregorian University examiners were seized with timidity and asked me not to include that in the published thesis What had stood to reason to a Calcutta Jesuit

---

[1]Francis X CLOONEY, S J, *Theology and Vedanta An Experiment in Comparative Theology* Albany State University of New York Press, 1993, pp 265 Bracketed numbers in the text refer to page numbers of the book.

[2]M ELIADE and R. PETTAZZONI, *L'histoire des religions a-t-elle un sens? Correspondence 1926-1959* Paris Cerf, 1994

because he was the heir of an inter-faith approach initiated by Brahmabāndhab Upādhyāy and ably practised by the Bengal Jesuits W. Wallace, P. Johanns, G. Dandoy, J. Putz, J. Bayart (to mention only the most prominent upto that date) was still unexplored and seemed risky in the Rome of the last days of Pius XII. Today, on the contrary, Clooney enjoys full liberty to tread any lane or by-lane of comparative theology.

1. Clooney's Approach to Comparative Theology

Clooney approaches his comparative task from the standpoint of his Catholic faith and distances himself from those who rely on the doubtful principle that all religions are equal carriers of the saving truth (4-6).

Rather than being a "comparative" reading of texts of different traditions, his task will be a *"collectio,"* i.e , a reading together of such texts in such a way that the reader engages and inscribes himself into them in an act of experimental theology by which he inscribes within the Christian theological tradition theological texts from outside it. He will then write according to his own resulting transformation More precisely, in his case, his writing will reflect how this engagement reconfigures his religious and theological understanding (7-11)

With approbation, Clooney refers here to Lee Yearley's recent *Mencius and Aquinas* Yearley says that such studies engage us in a process that utilizes the analogical imagination Does this imply that standards dissolve? No:

> Imaginative processes involve standards for judging interpretations and rules that can be followed well or badly They depend, for example, on the interpreter's sensibilities, they may evolve rather than demonstrate, and they produce inventions . These inventions have the power to give a new form to our experiences (quoted on 13)

2. Turning to Advaita

What attracted Clooney to the advaita writings of Sankara seems to have been their commentarial nature even more than their doctrinal contents When I turned to Sankara fifty years ago, the nature of his undertaking had been obscured and I wanted to rediscover his original purpose, formal object and method. I deemed this a necessary condition to the correct un-

derstanding of his doctrine. It became clear to me that he was unrestrictedly a *Srutivādin*, an exegete of the Upanisads. This point was no longer in dispute when Clooney began. There was no doubt that "among the schools of Vedānta, Sankara's school is distinguished by its consistent and thorough dependence on exegesis" (16).

Sankara is a *bhāsya-kāra*, a composer of commentaries (on most of the classical Upanisads, the Bhagavad-gītā and the Brahma-sūtras). These must be read and re-read, I may say, very religiously. But what Clooney sees more clearly than I did is the need to read also the subcommentaries of diverse authors on Sankara's works. I was rather afraid that they might lead me astray and I interpreted Sankara through Sankara. Clooney is convinced and shows that recourse to the subcommentators can be very enriching. It is even essential, although subcommentaries are "intricate, often difficult to use and often resistant to the questions modern readers pose to them" (18)

Clooney is, of course, aware that in calling advaita "theology" he is out of line with the majority of authors:

> In making the commentarial side of Advaita central and in describing Advaita as primarily theological, I distinguish my work from the mainstream of modern approaches to Advaita, which have used an almost entirely philosophical language in their treatment of Advaita (26-27)

But let us first see what he means by "theology":

> I refer to Advaita as "theology," as faith seeking understanding, a salvation-centred explication of the world generated out of an exegesis of sacred texts which seeks to commit the listening community to specific rituals and ethical practices (26)

Concerning the frequent reduction of Advaita Vedanta to being a "philosophy," Clooney makes these crucial remarks:

> It would be a mistake to isolate those Advaita themes [which appear to be philosophical and make sense even if one abstracts them from their scriptural context] and mistake the sum of them for a full understanding of the Advaita Reason does not operate independently in Sankara's Advaita, though it has a distinctive function, this distinctive role occurs within, and not apart from, exegetical and scripturally-formed thinking, it operates properly when exercised by properly educated, literate persons (29).

This is old teaching for many of us: the same assertion, say, "There is one God, the source of all, innermost in all," or "The supreme Brahman is the innermost Ātman of all," may be based on a sacred scripture or on independent reasoning, but it will not

have the same truth-value and give access to the same understanding in both cases. The formality of the assertion differs when it is either scriptural or purely rational. This is why my first undertaking was to ascertain the formal nature of Sankara's assertions. Clooney's remarks are important especially in our time when some are tempted to blur the differences between independent rational philosophy and revelational theology.

But can we expect to understand *the* meaning of a text? Just as I had to meet the challenge of Paul Valéry's aphorism, "Il n'y a pas de sens d'un texte" ("there is no such thing as the meaning of a text"), Clooney is confronted by the post-modern Derrida affirming that any text has endless meanings His apt reply is that

> Advaita maintains a "realist" notion of reading, in which texts are not thought to be open to endless meanings It discovers meaning through the identification and use of a set of intratextual rules of meaning By these rules a text means without being replaced by that to which it refers" (214, n 46)

3. The Texture of the Advaita Vedanta Text

There is an "array of possibilities opened up by the Upanisads as the textual basis on which Advaita composes its interpretative framework" (38)

When Bādarāyana (perhaps 4th cent A D) wished to reduce them to such a framework, he did it in the form of a set of 555 terse aphorisms (*sûtra*) variously distributed into topics (*adhikarana*), about 200 of them As the basic text of the Vedanta exegetes, it is called *Uttara Mîmāmsā Sûtra* or *Vedānta Sûtra* or *Brahma-Sûtra*. They have explained and commented on in the literary form of commentaries (*bhāsya*)

The first sûtra of a topic raises an exegetical doubt born from some upanisadic passage To resolve it, the commentator begins

> by distinguishing and exploring its full set of ramifications (He) elaborates the initial doubt which is to be explored in all its logical and rhetorical possibilities and follows through on the set of positions, counter-positions, distinctions, refinements and conclusions, all of which together constitute the adhikarana (47)

The occasions when Sankara diverges from Bādarāyana's position can help us to perceive the fruitfulness of this complex procedure For instance, in its analysis of man, *Taittirîya Up.*II,1-5 teaches a succession of five inner selves consisting of or sharing (*maya*) respectively in food, vital airs, mind, understanding and bliss. Bādarāyana says· "The self consisting of bliss is the highest

Self" (UMS 1.1.12). Sankara reaches first the same conclusion but then states a different interpretation on the following grounds:

(a) since the ending *-maya* means 'consisting in' in the first four cases and thus has a quantitative meaning, it surely keeps that meaning in the fifth so that this *ānanda-maya ātman* cannot be the highest Self which is devoid of quantity;

(b) in the same Up. 2.1.5, Brahman is said to be the tail/support of that *ānanda-maya ātman*, hence, is deeper and more interior than it.

In this interpretation, Sankara has had recourse to a secondary meaning (*laksanā*) of 'tail' (*puccha*). His subcommentator Vācaspati wonders whether the other terms also have to be taken in a secondary meaning but confirms Sankara's restriction of that to *puccha* as more economical (53-54) The other subcommentators too discuss, approve and appropriate this interpretation.

It is by entering actively into the *adhikarana* process that the reader becomes a participant This is the proper gate·

> All adhikaranas mediate what is outside the Text, including Brahman, through the Text The extratextual world is not properly seen or experienced except through the Text, and this Textual mediation constitutes the only "world" the Advaitins are interested in Everything is transformed by its inscription (in the Text), and is relevant only in that inscribed form (55)

Why does Clooney not restrict "the Text" to mean the Upanisads alone? Precisely because they cannot be grasped and appropriated apart from a well-conducted exegetical process:

> Advaita subsists as this textual composition which I have termed "the Text" . .. This Text is a complex, literary project — in its practices, in the developments it makes available to us in the form of commentary, and its resultant reinterpretation of the world is a project in writing The fruits of this Text can be abstracted only at the great cost of severing the vital connection between a Vedānta philosophy and an Uttara Mīmāmsā [Exegesis] One must remain ready to be educated, and so to become differently skilled by particular acts of reading and learned in the particular refinements by which the discernment of right positions advances (74).

4. Moving towards post-Textual Truths

Advaita moves towards post-textual truths that never become purely extra-textual:

> It argues that it is true that reality is nondual, that Brahman is devoid of all qualities, that the world has Brahman as its cause —

> material, efficient and final — and that these positions refer to the actual reality in which not only Advaitins live, but everyone as well (78).

Sankara extends the systematization of the Upanisads begun by Bādarāyana but he stands closer to their text. He does not, like him, uncover in them a doctrine *about* Brahman. For him, "the Upanisads cannot tell us about Brahman [which no word can express] but they fail in so rich, engaging and persuasive a way that we alter our way of living and realize Brahman in a radical revision of our own identities" (78).

Brahman is ineffable because it is perfect Fullness, not quantitative but qualitative; it is simple Substance, not a compound of substance plus accidents; in it there is nothing secondary, i.e., no *guna* (whether quality, quantity, form, real relation or any endowment) Sankara gives prominence to this teaching that Brahman is *nirguna* In UMS III 2 14, he supports Bādarāyana's clear position

> Brahman, we must definitely assert, is devoid of all colour, form, etc Why? On account of this being the main purpose of Scripture [In support of this, he then brings forth five pertinent quotations from the chief Upanisads]

Thus to the tension between the reader and the ineffability of Brahman is added the tension between the *nirguna* teachings and their contraries, the *saguna* teachings Sankara relaxes the second tension by assigning a different intention to the two kinds of texts The *nirguna* texts intend to teach the true nature of Brahman; "but other texts, which have as their topic Brahman with figure, express injunctions related to meditation "

Another exegetical move by which Advaita organizes the Upanisads in order to make their truth evident is the designation of so-called "great sentences" (*mahā-vākya*) which sum up the entire meaning of an upanisadic instruction. Such are, for instance, "I am Brahman" (*Aham Brahmāsmi*) (*Brhad Ār Up.* 1.4.10) or "That you are" (*Tat-tvam asi*) (*Chānd. Up* 6 8 7). Their effect is perhaps greater because they are paradoxical.

> A great saying, such as "You are That" upsets our reading of the upanisads because, in the Advaita reading, it seems to equate two things that ought not to be equated the phenomenal, finite self (*tvam*) and Brahman (*Tat*) It is a truth which has no evident reference or confirmation in the world of ordinary experience Made uncomfortable ., the reader is made to seek a stance in which nonduality can be perceived as true, and the search for this requires a rereading of the rest of the given upanisad (86).

The imposition of a philosophical interpretation upon a great saying should not be immediate but come only after rereading it as a skilful textual achievement terminating a highly pedagogical dialogue

As this point Clooney engages the reader into an active reading of the Text around four key-passages in order to trace the Advaita's construction of the right meaning of the upanisads. These pages 88-102 cannot be summarized here but we can pick out a few illuminating bits

As we have seen already, it is axiomatic with Sankara that "different texts have different purposes and must be used accordingly" (102) This guides him, for instance, when explaining the multiplicity of names of Brahman He distinguishes those which apply in every meditation from those that apply only in special ones The first are meant to teach the true nature of Brahman and are thus fundamental, such are "Brahman is one without a second, reality, knowledge, bliss," etc ; the second are mere meditational constructs, such as "its head is joy, its right side delight," "uniting all that is pleasant," etc Vācaspati refines a little this distinction but Amalānanda enriches it by asking why the Brahman is better indicated by a series of terms than by just one It is, he replies, because they co-operate in correcting wrong ideas about Brahman

> [i] Truth, [ii] consciousness, [iii] bliss, [iv] infinity and [v] self are terms which mutually qualify one another, overturn [in turn] the flaws of [i] falsity, [ii] non-consciousness, [iii] sorrow, [iv] limitedness and [v] lack of self, and so define that single bliss which is the basis for truth, etc It is just like when the words "existent," "material thing," and "pot" [all define] a single pot (on UMS III 3 11)

Clooney could have pointed out that this excellent clarification is just a rephrasing of Sankara's bhāsya on *Taitt Up.*II 1 (towards the end), a precious teaching exploited also by Sāyana.

5. In Defence of Advaita

"Profoundly exegetical and pedagogical, Advaita as a doctrine is also a (re)description of the world It occurs throughout the Text and its force accumulates in a series of individual defences against competing views of the world" (102) Let us pay attention, first, to Sankara's defence of the relative reasonableness of Advaita·

In UMS II 1 11, Sankara agrees with the proposition that reasoning is legitimate, inevitable and necessary for life, and that it is at work even during the practice of exegesis But unless it is the reasoning of the scripturally literate person, it cannot provide an adequate view of reality as a whole Independent reason is inherently inadequate for several reasons

(a) [because] Brahman is not an ordinary object of knowledge ,

(b) the reasoning of the uneducated person is notoriously unreliable ,

(c) [in this matter even well-grounded reasoning cannot possibly be final and conclusive for, writes Sankara,] "this extremely sublime subject-matter, concerned with the true nature of being, the basis of liberation, cannot even be guessed at without the help of the scriptures "

Brahman is an objective extra- and post-textual reality, legitimate, upanisadic statements about Brahman do not contradict properly exercised reason The purpose of argument is to show that there are no reasonable grounds for seeking an explanation of the whole other than that indicated in the upanisads (104-105)

Clooney then examines the attacks of Sāmkhya and other systems against Vedānta, their rebuff by Sankara and further his direct assaults against the inner contradictions of the *Sāmkhya Kārikā* (106-113) He concludes

In defending its positions, Advaita precludes access to these positions from any neutral position that might appear independent of [the Vedic scriptures] The truth is available, yet only within the confines of a demanding Text and consequent upon an engagement in it (114)

It is now important to consider an obstacle which hinders many a reader of Advaita texts on the one hand, the claims of Advaita "are articulated in and from sacred texts as understood by a believing community," on the other hand, many readers are outsiders who lack faith in the infallibility of the Upanisads What access can they find to their truth-claims? Clooney's answer is

It is precisely here, on the margin of the Text, and not in speculating about the rational claims of Advaita or in a search for the experience to which it points, that a point of access appears Though demanding, the Text is a teacher It instructs the interested inquirer in the skills of approach to Brahman, it encourages the reader's engagement in it, and if properly learned, it guides the reader to a truth which can be cognized after it (114)

This is nicely said but is it not a fact that the access to the Text is barred to many by a whole array of exterior and interior limitations imposed by Advaita itself to those who seek access to it?

6. Qualifying for Advaita

Sankara calls his undertaking *brahma-jijñāsā*. Etymologically, *jijñāsā* means a repeated or unflagging (*ji*-) desire (*-sā*) to know (*-jña*). In current usage, it rather means 'enquiry' which is the fruit of such a desire. Thus Jaimini introduces his *Dharma Mîmāmsā Sûtra* as *dharma-jijñāsā*, the enquiry into the (ritual) duties (of the higher classes), and then provides the principles and rules of exegesis necessary to interpret correctly the *Brāhmanas*. This inquiry, says his commentator Sabara, is made to fulfil the injunction, "One must study one's proper portion [of the Veda]" (*svādhyāyā'dhyetavyah*). But Sankara insists that his undertaking, though it is an enquiry, is not conditioned by any injunction or by any other antecedent such as a prior practice of Vedic rituals. Its starting source is the very desire to know the Brahman not vaguely but most deeply (*avagati-paryantam jñānam*). This desire is innate (*naisargika*), unprecedented, original, yet common to all human beings.

Its goal, however, is most sublime so that not everyone is simply, by birth, qualified to pursue it along the appropriate way. Yet the sole prerequisites, says Sankara, are the following interior qualities:

> Discrimination between things that are eternal and things that are noneternal, a loss of taste for the enjoyment of objects here [in this life] and hereafter [in various possible paradises], control of the mind, control of the senses and organs, etc., and the desire for liberation (UMS I 1 1).

In emphasizing these prerequisites, Sankara does not echo any scriptural assertion but rather draws from his experience of renunciation as a sannyāsin.

As enquiry, Brahma-jijñāsā simply extends to new materials (the Upanisads) the older mîmāmsā practice, skills and pedagogy. It also restricts itself to students conforming with special conditions of birth, social rank and education which Clooney discusses, pp. 134-140, in terms of a tension between the Text and the grasping of its truth.

I interject here a personal view regarding the problem he had

raised, namely, how can people pursue Advaita who do not share Sankara's faith in the dogma (initiated by Jaimini[3]) of the authorlessness and, hence, infallibility of the Vedas? It seems to me that, since they too share innately the desire to know the very essence of Brahman, they can on that basis become legitimate students of Advaita Their study will not be "faith seeking understanding" but "desire (for the blissful and liberating knowledge/intuition) seeking fulfilment"

Coming back to those born within the orthodox system of Hindu dharma (duties, prohibitions and restrictions), what happens when they begin to seek Advaita liberation? Clooney studies this in UMS III 4 Normally they continue their ritual practices but change their motivation instead of performing them for the usual ritual goals, they perform them now "for the sake of knowledge," namely for the sake of the purifications, detachment and increase of spiritual desire which those rites will produce These will be at least indirect helps towards the pursuit of knowledge Only the *Brahma-jña*, the realized knower of Brahman is entirely free

> Just as the ineffable truth of Advaita occurs in practice only after a thorough appropriation of the Advaita Text, the state of life in which one is completely free from restrictions occurs only after the inner appropriation of those restrictions (149)

In conclusion of his ch 4, Clooney puts the emphasis on the tension between the ultimate simplicity of the Advaita truth and the complex requirements of reading the Text which yields it, a tension which is extreme for those wishing to enter Advaita from outside orthodox Hinduism But, on the basis of his own self-initiation to its Exegesis, he assures them that this entry is in fact open to them

> Though the truth of the Text may elusively conceal itself behind the complex demands of proper reading, our (mis)reading nevertheless provides a simple rejoinder to that complexity, and so cooperates with the Advaita to express once more its characteristic tension between the complex requirements of reading and the simple event of insight (151)

7. Towards a retrieval of Catholic Theology after Advaita

Catholic Theology is very much embedded in revealed Texts commented upon again and again The Western commentarial

[3]Cf my article, "The Presuppositions of Jaimini and the Vedântins," in *Journal of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, XI/2 (1994), especially p 80

tradition begins with commentaries on Plato from the second cent. B.C. From the third century A.D., Greek Christians take over this work and quickly extend it to Biblical writings. The commentaries written by the Byzantine Christians are often outstanding and have been imitated by the Arabs especially after the Muslim conquest of Iran From Muslim and Jewish workshops in Spain and, later, Sicily, some of those commentarial works reach Western Europe by the late 12th and early 13th century and give rise to the Western Latin commentarial tradition [4]

In this tradition, St Thomas Aquinas stands out as most similar to Sankara More than Origen, Augustine, Albert the Great, Bonaventure or Duns Scotus, he resembles him in the clear apprehension of our innate desire to intuit the very essence of God, his reliance on revealed texts and holy traditions, his method of elucidating them and some of the saving truths he unveils to his disciples It is to him that Clooney turns when he decides to reread a Catholic Text after his appropriation of the Advaita Text — though for no compelling reason but because it pleases him and he may thus reach unexpected possibilities (155). He is now ready to reconceive of Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* as a "Text",

> a series of (written) acts of language which are irreducible to any author's intention but which are read as intertextually composed into a larger whole composed of a series of related texts e g, a text along with those which are inscribed in it by citation, and those which exist in the form of commentary upon it (157)

He will begin with examples in which parts of the S T. are read differently after the study of Advaita The first one uses ST I 13 4 in comparison with UMS III 3 11-13 and Amalānanda's commentary thereon Reading them in parallel shows immediately their common topic the legitimacy of the scriptural appellations of God although God/Brahman is ineffable The similarities of questioning and replies are striking But rereading will lead to differences too and, therefore, possible enrichments and a better nourished theology beyond but in a prolongation of both Sankara and Aquinas (159-167)

---

[4]This rich commentarial literature is becoming better known thanks to the progress of the project of publishing (chiefly from Germany) critical editions of those Greek and Byzantine commentaries and, through the collaboration of many scholars around Richard Sorabji, London, English translations of them.

Some strategies are sketched out for fuller exploitation of this comparative reading: (1) coordination of selected texts, (2) superimposition of one text on another, (3) comparative conversation, (4) attention to what Ph. Wheelwright calls the "semantic motion" of metaphors (the latter operate a transmutation in two possible ways "epiphor," which is the "outreach and extension of meaning through comparison," and "diaphor," which is "the creation of new meanings by juxtaposition and synthesis"), (5) collage, as strategy [to my mind more hazardous] inspired by J Derrida it consists in excising familiar texts from their legitimate contexts in order to read them together without prior warrant, such newly aligned materials destabilize the reader and compel him or her to coordinate and re-contextualize them in novel ways (168-175)

I would add a sixth strategy. the placing of parallel texts within their respective long range historical contexts, say, Thomistic texts as coming at the conclusion of a twelve-century long struggle of Catholic nondualistic monotheism against Gnostic-Manichean dualism, a struggle rooted in the tension born from conflicting Biblical ways of God-talk, either transcendant or anthropomorphic,[5] and, on the other side, Sankara's monotheistic nondualism as opening up a period of many centuries during which his position and his hermeneutic of conflicting Upanisadic texts will be nibbled and pared by a Ramanuja or displaced by the dualism of a Madhva

Are there limits to the possibility of reading together theological Texts of diverse origins? Are there incomparable Texts? Clooney discusses fruitfully ST III 46 3, a central text of St Thomas on the Passion of Christ, and concludes

> There is no persuasive reason to refuse to reread [this text] alongside a selected Advaita text, even if the juxtaposition highlights distance, inappropriateness and apparent incomparability Since comparative reading does not depend on similarity, extreme dissimilarity is no reason to end such reading (179)

In the ST, we find many Biblical texts being quoted to support or illuminate theological argumentation and likewise many citations from the writings of the Fathers of the Church and later theologians For similar reasons Sankara's writings are replete with Upanishadic citations and later texts of the Brahmanic tradition Clooney remarks

[5]See, for instance, the very informative book of G G STROUMSA, *Savoir et salut Traditions juives et tentations dualistes dans le christianisme ancien* Paris Cerf, 1992

> The best readers are those who appreciate the actual citations as indications of the larger contexts from which they are drawn . [not] as mere appeals to authority [or mere embellishments or mere proof-texts] (181-182)

This larger context is the one I spoke about when suggesting a sixth strategy which, therefore, Clooney has in fact integrated. And now a further remark drawn from his experience may aptly close this account of his book In a comparative setting, one acquires a refined sense of discrimination, an appreciation of the subtle linguistic refinements which enhance a Text and amplify its significance

Conclusion

It is comforting, forty years after the completion of my dissertation on the theological method of Sankara, to get from a confrere with better scholarship and discerning insight a confirmation of its truth and an extension of its worth.

During those forty years, the will to reduce Sankara's *Brahmajijñāsā* to a merely rational intuitional philosophy has on the whole remained predominant K Satchidananda Murty was an exception with his *Revelation and Reason in Advaita*, published in 1959 In recent years, thanks to the novel interest of Indian scholars in Hermeneutics, one discerns a still timid change towards a recognition of the true nature of Sankara's writings. In 1991, Anantanand Rambachan, trained in Leeds, U K , published a monograph entitled *Accomplishing the Accomplished The Vedas as a Source of Valid Knowledge in Sankara* [6] In this he retraces the path of enquiry I had myself followed and reaches the same results I can but recommend firmly this clear book which readers will find very accessible. (He thinks that he has to damn my work on one point, namely, whether the realization of *Brahmajñāna* is obtained by a further *pramāna* supplementary to the scriptural enquiry and which would be the final *anubhava*; but in fact I agree with him that there is no such supplementary *pramāna*.)

Richard DeSMET, S.J.

De Nobili College
Pune - 411014

[6]University of Hawaii Press, 1991, 179 pages

VJTR 58 (1994) 808-812

Listen to the Spirit

The Year of the Youth

The coming year 1995 has been declared the Year of Youth We need it badly, because the world is growing old and the Church also True, modern life moves fast, the expanding cities are vibrating with hectic activity But there is anxiety behind all this agitation, not just fear of some particular danger, but something like an apocalyptic fear At the end of the first millennium such apocalyptic fear gripped the world Christ's reign of thousand years was over, "and when the thousand years are ended Satan will be loosed from his prison" (Rev 20 7) At the end of the second millennium our fears are secular we are engaged in an apparently irreversible process of ecological suicide Scientists calculate the centuries, or the decades, which are still left to complete this process of self-destruction of our planet In the political life we are surrounded by disasters, ethnic mania, destructive power-struggles of colossal dimensions, all out of control And what will happen once the proliferation of atomic power can no longer be stopped? We cover our fears with faster activity — the flow of a river accelerates as it approaches the abyss Below the fever of activities we feel the creeping weakness of old age

The Church enjoyed a dream of youthfulness at the time of Vatican II. Jesus, the light of the nations, is shining on the brow of the Church (LG 1) which was again seen as the community of the entire people of God, guided by the Holy Spirit The hierarchy is bound together in collegiality with no other purpose but to lead God's people in freedom and order through a new era, towards final salvation (cf LG 18) In fearless confidence an open invitation was extended to the whole world to face the pressing problems of our time in the light of the Gospel Some dreams were, probably, naive (youth has the right to a degree of naivety), but a new enthusiasm returned to all areas of the Church's life and activities

It did not last very long The administration returned to "normal" As to doctrine, the approved language and the "safe" patterns of thinking, tested by centuries, cannot easily be replaced The changes introduced caused unrest, therefore a firm, central control was needed Some may have felt like old Nicodemus it is hardly possible for a man in advanced years to return to his mother's womb and to start all over again (cf Jn 3 4) Old patterns prevailed Lay people were disappointed, mostly women, lay people still feel themselves to be the object of the

decision-making body of the clergy rather than as God's people responsible for the realization of God's reign in our world

Especially the youth is disappointed The freshness of a short spring is over Monotony has come back to catechism classes and to Sunday Mass A class of children was asked to write birthday letters to the Church, their "Mother" They said nice things but added also with youthful frankness often you are quite boring on Sundays, and you seem to know very little about us, your sermons are all preached for the grownups

Naturally we have problems with youth we are sad and concerned when we see them dropping out, becoming apathetic, rebellious and hostile towards the Church Parents have no end of problems with growing children Still, if we are serious about this year of the youth and really desire to communicate in constructive and helpful ways with the young generation it may be helpful if we, adults — who still are and want to remain in control of our world —, were first to ask the young people whether *they* have problems *with us*

They may first reproach us and tell us with anxiety We are the next generation, we shall inherit from you our land What are you doing with our country which is meant for us? India was beautiful, but you have dirtied the rivers and polluted the atmosphere, and instead of our forests you leave us a desert They are critical, often resentful and rebellious They are longing for a better world This we ought to recognize, and if they want to have their say and to do something about it they must be encouraged, even if they want to do it in their own way We hear nice accounts of youth groups binding a "rakhi" on a tree it is a pledge of protection and loyalty to nature About the Patna youth we are told that they were angry with the ruthless destruction of whatever greenery is still left in their city For a tree that was cut down against regulations they took out a funeral procession people must realize what trees mean for a city They took up other items the potholes on a busy road became too deep and dangerous One day they declared the road unfit for traffic and put it to better use at the peak hour they used it as playground All traffic stopped, and thousands of people came to watch the badminton game They counted ten thousand, including the police that were sent to open the road They made their point in their unorthodox way, and the papers were happy for a catching headline — soon the road was repaired

The problems of youth are the same as those of the nation, for the growing generation they are even more disturbing as they concern their entire life At present they need education and training, basic and professional, which many cannot afford And what are their job opportunities in a society of ever growing unemployment? We understand their restlessness

There is, most of all, the personal sphere, the growth of the personality young people must find their own life, they search for something

which they cannot describe No one can give it to them, they must find it, but they must he supported in their search The most frequent complaint of young people is the lack of understanding of the older generation, beginning with parents The tradition handed down through generations is very strong in our families and communities But today's world is changing very fast The youth is exposed to a bewildering multitude of influences Traditional customs and ways of thinking seem out of date Whom shall they believe, to whom can they turn? Youth resent to be commanded to believe this or to do that They want to understand, and they have many questions Is it not their right to ask them?

These are our problems with the youth Educational science and practice offer helpful approaches But on this eve of the year of the youth let us open the Bible and meditate on the most beautiful teenager story from Luke's Gospel Luke is the genius of story telling He does not just narrate an interesting episode but tells it with every word loaded and full of deep meaning So we read the story of the twelve year-old Jesus in the temple, the conclusion of the infancy account, the transition to Jesus' ministry

We know, of course, that this is not just a story, that it contains the first manifestation of Jesus' vocation and mission But Luke describes this manifestation in story form with deep human implications, the richness of the message reveals itself in the human setting

It is a story of tradition of the Jewish custom of pilgrimage for the Passover celebration in Jerusalem, the feast that embodied the national and religious identity of the people, the memory of Exodus and Covenant when Yahweh broke the bondage of the people and made them his own "Every year" Jesus' parents used to go, and when Jesus was twelve — when a boy was thirteen it became obligatory — he joined them "according to the custom " All was settled by tradition With the pilgrims, Jesus joins the singing of psalms, he rejoices with them when they come to the Temple, the house of Yahweh When the celebration begins, his mind is full of the desire to understand the customs the lamb, the meal It was the custom that the youngest member of the group had to ask what these celebrations meant He longs to know more Surely the scholars in the temple can explain it better Here Luke takes up the story again there is the boy "in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions " Traditions come to life in him these are not just ancient stories about the Exodus and Sinai, they are his life In the sanctuary of his conscience burns the unspeakable love of his Father, which gives an intimate ring to his words, unusual in boys of his age, so that "they were amazed at his understanding and answers " He is totally absorbed in listening to their explanations of God's ways with his people, forgetful of the actual reality — such are teenagers — until, totally unexpected, reality breaks in again Here they stand, Mary and Joseph "Child (is he still a child,

their child?), why have you done this to us?" How could he simply run away, keep them in the dark for three days! For Jesus it is so simple, so evident They should know "Why did you search for me? Did you not know that I had to be in my Faher's house?" What is most natural for Jesus remains a puzzle to them "They did not understand what he was saying to them" Teenagers are never understood But Jesus is a good teenager, and "he went down to Nazareth and was obedient to them"

It is a touching teenager story, the dawning of a life, a vocation becomes articulate for the first time, amazing to the older generation, incomprehensible to parents, the sprouting seed to Jesus' mission

Luke's story is a meditative introduction to the Year of Youth — it may help us to grow in a constructive attitude towards the young generation

We must love youth, not pamper or spoil them, but remain close to them in affection and understanding even — and especially — when we do not understand them From Joseph's and Mary's point of view Jesus' behaviour was simply impossible, incomprehensible They did not understand But the family remained united

Believe in youth not in everything they talk, not in all their dreams and plans, but believe in "them" Through all their confusions, doubts, fantasies we see the genuine search for true life, fulfilled, meaningful, fruitful

Take their questions seriously they want to understand, to know Often their questions are annoying, at times we get angry because we ourselves do not know the answer but are not ready to admit our ignorance

Never teach them anything of what you are not personally convinced, never demand anything from them that you are not doing yourself They cannot be bluffed

Understand their rebellion Many things are wrong in our world and in the Church We get used to them and have learnt to live with them — they still have to learn Often they exaggerate, generalize, they misinterpret people, make sweeping statements and demand immediate changes They may also turn destructive and do much harm to others or to themselves We should not try to cover up what is wrong or disguise failures, in individuals and in public life Slowly they must learn to understand, to tolerate, to pardon They also must be forgiven We must help them

Youth is the hope of the world, of the Church The future is born in their hearts Meet them not only in times of conflict but also in their good hours listen to their inspirations when their heart is awake with the desire for a good life, a fuller life, serving the poor, the suffering, a life in God's love Youth is not yet fettered in the mechanisms of a profit- and success-oriented society, they want to breathe freedom Their longings are threatened by anxieties, disappointments, and their enthusiasm is subject to the tides of fervour and frustration Persever-

ance is difficult in a culture of restlessness Be with them not as a supervisor, but as the companion they need, whose concern they feel Slowly they will learn to walk the road on which God leads them

And pray for them God's image is deep in their heart, often hidden, but a living seed, sprouting, groping towards the light "Father, they are thine, you have given them to me, keep them in your name" (cf Jn 17)

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Correspondence

The Cosmic Christ

Dear Editor,

I have enjoyed reading Fr M Amaladoss's article "An Emerging Indian Theology," especially the second part (VJTR, Sept '94) But I felt that the concluding section, "The Image of Christ" (p 571) is not a model of clarity

It seems "Indians speak of the cosmic Christ " Paul, a contemporary of Jesus, already then spoke of the cosmic Christ "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, for in him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities — all things were created through him and for him " (Col 1 15)

The author thinks that equating the cosmic Christ with the Christ of faith is not correct But it is clear that Paul made this equation, and saw no problem in it For Paul the cosmic Christ is not someone other than the Christ of faith

"The cosmic Christ is related to the Jesus of history in the same way that mystery is related to history" (*ibid*) Cannot the same thing be said about the relationship between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history?

The author then goes on to equate the cosmic Christ and the Word of God It is difficult to see how this equation can stand

That the paschal mystery "has cosmic transhistoric and mysteric dimensions" is hardly a discovery of Indian Theology

Lumen/Jyothi's C M CHERIAN, S J
Ponoth Rd, Kochi 682017

Dear Sir

Kudos to the CPCI

This is in response to CPCI statement on GATT It is very gratifying to note that CPCI has chosen to think aloud about the welfare of the nation. There is an allegation that the Church puts the interest of religion above the welfare of the nation Now by making a critical judgement over GATT it is proving that its prime concern is the good of the people The CPCI statement should be made public through the secular press The CBCI could also come out with a similar statement on GATT and should go to the secular press It should be made clear that our aim is not undermining any political establishment but ensuring the welfare of the common people and the poor in particular There are various other issues — like the Narmada dam, human rights abuses, atrocities against women and dalits, etc — on which the Church should stop keeping diplomatic silence It is very unfortunate that the Church has not taken any stand on the issue of the precarious condition of the Narmada dam oustees As the bearer of the legacy of Jesus Christ, the liberator, the Church has no option other than speaking out in favour of the human person and the dignity of life It should not hesitate to collaborate and cooperate with all like-minded agencies and organizations in the struggle for the welfare of the nation I express my gratitude to the CPCI for bringing out this statement on GATT and to Vidyajyoti Journal for giving it space in its pages

With love,

Carmel Vidya Bhavan **BR PAULSON MF, CMI**
Pune 411014

A Clarification

Dear Sir,

With regard to the article on "Domestic Violence The Indian Catholic Scene" (*VJTR* May 1993), we would like to know how the author comes to his assertion that "the big Church funding agencies like Misereor and Missio have not contributed significantly to setting up refuges" (p 305) With regard to Misereor we would like to clarify that this is definitely true in so far as Misereor is not setting up any institution of its own but is responding to requests that we get from India itself That "homes and refuges are practically non-existent in Indian dioceses" (*ibid*) is therefore not caused by our unwillingness to support centres such as outlined by the author but by the scarcity of such applications

Hoping to have clarified the matter a bit, we send our best wishes and kind regards,

Misereor, **Stephen PUHL**
Postfach 1450, **Ulrich MORNBERG**
D-52015 Aachen Germany

On Suicide

Sir,

This is in response to the article by Fr Felix Podimattam on the Supreme Court Judgement depenalizing suicide The article is misleading I am not arguing that the person who has failed in his attempt to commit suicide be punished adding ignominy to agony But the pertinent question is what are *the reasons* for which section 309 has been quashed Fr Podimattam considers suicide a "tragedy" brought about by "the villain" — society Does the judgement consider suicide a tragedy? And what is the solution of the honourable judges? To give full right to the victim of villainous society to commit suicide without a religious or moral prick of conscience? Should a moral theologian sing "amen" to this stand?

I am interested to know the reaction of Fr Podimattam on the following assertions in the Judgement

1 "The right to live of which Article 21 speaks of can be said to bring in its trail the right not to live a forced life" (No 36)

2 "So, where is non-religiosity in the act of suicide so far as our social ethos is considered? And it is this ethos, this social mores, which our law has to reflect and respect" (83) "There is thus nothing against religion in what he does" (81)

3 "It would be too hazardous to make a bold and bald statement that the commission of suicide is per se an immoral act If human beings can be treated inhumanely, as a very large segment of our population is, which in a significant measure may be due to wrong (immoral) acts of others, the charge of immorality cannot be, and in any case should not be, levied when such human beings feel and think that it would be better to end the wretched life instead of allowing further humiliation or torture" (90)

Fr Podimattam considers suicide a matter of private morality on which state may not legislate "The state may not legislate in the field of private morality," "the proper scope of the law is public morality " Is this assumption tenable? Wisely enough, the Judges do not make a distinction of private and public morality to arrive at their conclusion

May I simply vote from the famous book of Lord Patrick Devlin, *The Enforcement of Morals* The Lord Justice of Appeal asks "If prostitution is private immorality and not the law's business, what concern has the law with the ponce or the brothel-keeper or the householder who permits habitual prostitution?" He further wrote "The suppression of vice is as much the law's business as the suppression of subversive activities, it is no more possible to define a sphere of private morality than it is to define one of private subversive activity It is wrong to talk of private morality or of the law not being concerned with immorality as such or to try to set rigid bounds to the part which the law may play in the suppression of vice There are no theoretical limits to the power of the State to legislate against treason and sedition, and likewise I think there can be no theoretical limits to legislation against immorality You may argue that if a man's sins affect only himself it cannot be the concern of society If he chooses to get drunk every night in the privacy of his own home, is any one except himself the worse for it? But suppose a quarter or a half of the population got drunk every night, what sort of society would it be?"

Chief Editor, Sathyadeepam **Fr Paul THELAKAT**
P B 1916, Kochi - 682018

Book Reviews

Church and World The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community (A Faith and Order Study Document), Faith and Order Paper No 151 Geneva WCC Publications, 1990 Pp viii-90 $ 8 50 ISBN 2-8254-1004-7

One of the landmarks in the history of the Ecumenical Movement is the realisation that the unity of the Church is intricately and inexorably bound up with the unity of humankind The IV Assembly of the WCC at Uppsala in 1968 stands as a watershed in the articulation of this concern Further down the road, the concern was deepened, enriched and placed in its proper perspective It was realised that the unity of humankind which the ecumenical movement should be seeking could not be of the 'technological' or 'multinational' kind that unifies humanity but ignores the essential questions of injustice and the consequent tragedy in the world The unity which the ecumenical movement should work for is rooted in justice and equality as emanating from the Gospel and related to God's Kingdom Hence the Programme "Unity of the Church and the Renewal of the Human Community" which was officially launched at the meeting of Faith and Order in Lima, Peru 1982 The change of title from "unity of humankind" to "renewal of the human community" is significant

The present Study Document is the first result of this programme, integrating the findings of seven international consultations and the contributions "of many persons from different theological perspectives and varied cultural backgrounds who, each in close touch with his or her own tradition, have struggled to find what can be said together today about God's call to the churches to seek unity and to be signs and instruments of the renewal of the human community" (Preface) The Document continues and develops the earlier work done in Faith and Order on "The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Humankind" and "The Community of Women and Men in the Church." As the Introduction states clearly, the Study Document integrates four elements namely (1) the Kingdom of God in the biblical perspective, (2) the Church as mystery, (3) the Church as prophetic sign and instrument of grace in a world crying out for healing and renewal, and (4) the eschatological and doxological affirmation of the certain final realisation of God's saving purpose for all humankind These four elements are interwoven in the seven chapters of the Document

One should bear in mind that this is only a 'Study Document' and moreover 'ecumenical', therefore neither a comprehensive treatise on the subject nor the final word on it Nonetheless it marks a big step forward and is a significant contribution in the process of reflection on the relationship between the mission and the unity of the Church The two are inseparably linked together and there are no two ways about it In that sense the document is a milestone

The book introduces one to a method of doing theology and interpreting the Bible in the context of the Church's mission in a world torn apart by poverty, injustice and oppression This method is indispensable for theologising today if the Church is to be a sign and instrument of the unity of humankind I would suggest that the Document should form part of any course/study on Ecclesiology The questions given at the end of every chapter could be useful for group work

Convitto S Tommaso A. COUTO
Rome

Introducing the Catechism of the Catholic Church Edited by Cyril de Souza, sdb, and Thomas Kalathuveettil, sdb Bangalore Kristu Jyoti Publications, 1994 Pp xvi-205 N p

It is a remarkable achievement that barely a few months after the publication of the English edition of the CCC (now available in an Indian edition by TPI for Rs 165, pb 115), an introduction to this compendium of Christian belief and practice prepared by Indian theologians should be offered "to the lay persons " Eight Salesian authors contribute sixteen essays explaining the history, outline and contents of this catechism which cannot be called, as Pius XII called its predecessor, "a small book," but which John Paul II declares to be "a sure norm for teaching the faith and thus a valid and legitimate instrument of ecclesial communion" (p. 4 of CCC)

The editors explain the aim of this introduction in the following words "The collection of essays found in this volume although loosely connected with one another is intended solely to help towards a critical reading of CCC The type of service this volume intends to offer is the following: situating the CCC in the historical, theological and catechetical context, bringing to evidence the salient points of each section with a brief summary, highlighting the points that need attention while drafting the local catechism in our Indian context, and indicating the use of CCC in our pastoral and catechetical ministry" (xv)

The historical review covers from the Catechism of the Council of Trent through the many catechisms of the post-Tridentine period, down to the Pius X Catechism, Vatican II and the post-Vatican concerns The more recent history is the reason why one of the concerns of this Catechism is to be a correction to what is seen as an excessive anthropological and experiential approach of the catechesis of the sixties and seventies and to give primary importance to doctrinal content The ten moments in the history of this text between 1987 and 1992 are recalled and a clear outline of the distribution of the material is given 1 Faith proclaimed (revelation and creed), 2 Faith celebrated (liturgy and sacraments), 3 Faith lived (the human vocation and the ten commandments), and Faith prayed (prayer and the Our Father)

After the two introductory essays, each major section is commented on. its central teaching, the way it is presented, its value and its limitations or the scope for further development or adaptation The horizon of the analysis and commentary is always the need to express the faith for India and other local churches, a need which is also affirmed by the Pope in his Apostolic Constitution presenting the Catechism (CCC pp 1-5) and is repeated in the Prologue of the Catechism itself (CCC pp 6-10) The CCC is presented as "a sure and authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine and particularly *for preparing local catechisms*" (John Paul II, emphasis added), for itself "does not set out to provide the adaptation of doctrinal presentations and catechetical methods required by the differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and ecclesial condition among all those to whom it is addressed" (CCC Prologue)

But, as Fr Puthanangady says in the concluding essay, "Contextualising the CCC to India" (194-9), what we need is not a mere adaptation of the Catechism to India, but an inculturated formulation of the faith relevant to this country with its religious and cultural traditions In doing this, the CCC can play a very useful role by being a point of reference with a view to our communion with the universal Church."

There is therefore a task ahead of us Those who will be called to attempt it will be grateful for this introduction Catechists and lay people, priests and religious alike, will use it profitably as they work through the rich material of the CCC

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Family and Priesthood in the Syro-Malabar Church By Xavier Kidangean Kottayam Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1993 Pp xxii-265 Rs 120 ISBN 81-86063-25-5

Recent decades have witnessed a surging growth in the literature on the oriental Catholic Church. The different heritages besides the Western are appreciated as store houses of spirituality that give impetus for renewal. The call for the preservation of Eastern patrimonies has given a boost to theologising in the oriental way. The Eastern Churches in India, especially the Syro-Malabar Church, are keen to preserve their spiritual heritage and restore what ever was lost Several indepth studies have made on different ecclesial aspects But most of them are focussed on identifying and preserving the traditions that would establish the individuality of the Church Consequently these discussions are steeped in unending disputes, especially over liturgy Sufficient attention is not paid to questions of adaptation, inculturation and the burning issues of contemporary society

Family and Priesthood in the Syro-Malabar Church is an attempt to do theology from a different perspective It deals with topics rarely touched upon in recent Syro-Malabar literature The author has found them to be a rich source that lies unexplored

The book is the author's doctoral dissertation presented at the Angelicum, Rome Coupling two complementary themes, the author explores the wealth of family life and its relationship to the priestly vocation The many vocations in this Church are the consequence of the conducive atmosphere created in the family. It is clearly brought out how the family ties are influenced by the Hindu system of communal life Several customs and practices of theirs have been responsible for the way of life of the Christians The family remained indigenous — a synthesis of the Hindu and eastern Christian cultures

In the pre-Portuguese period there evolved the 'Malapanate' system for training candidates to the priesthood It was born from a meeting between 'Gurukulavasam', a Hindu form of education, and the eastern tradition of Edessa Nisibis. The outstanding feature was the personal relationship between the teacher and student. While the author is appreciative of the educational system of the ancient times, he does not entertain any illusion about its rebirth in its old form He is also critical of the malpanate way of priestly training for it did not lay sufficient emphasis on intellectual formation. This may be the reason for the non-existence of any theologian of renown in the ancient Syro-Malabar Church Yet the spirit of that formation is essential for the creation of a committed clergy

The author is open to the problems of contemporary society He examines the various experiments going on in different seminaries. The Syro-Malabar Church can take pride in the abundance of vocations At the same time it should see that its clergy address themselves to the present age This calls for a more incultured formation coupled with a keen awareness of contemporary problems. Though this Church is at a great advantage regarding inculturation because it has kept close relations with Hinduism, unfortunately the present seminary system is completely western When the seminaries venture into new experiments they should keep in mind the need of rediscovering their roots The link with the roots which is the basis of the vocation boom is not taken into account at this stage of formation. Consequently attempts at inculturation do not meet with success.

The search is for a well-integrated system of formation suited to the cultural, traditional social and spiritual patrimony of the St Thomas Christians and, along with the spiritual and pastoral formation, a theological education suited to the challenges of the modern world. A reorganization of the curriculum is proposed to facilitate a task-oriented formation that will equip the candidates with the spirit of commitment for the liberation of people. Subjects which are purely western are to be replaced with oriental patterns, as eastern philosophy

and theology can contribute to evangelization

The book treats elaborately the institutions and agents of formation, viz, family, parish, Sunday and regular schools, pious associations and the media New insights are thrown on the family which is the domestic Church by examining it in the light of the Hindu 'Grahasthashrama' Retaining the good aspects of the Malpanate system, renewal has to take place through a contextualisation of theology, culture, and liturgy

The book presents a relevant theme that can also be related to the context of the International Year of the Family It is surely a contribution to eastern scholarship and Indian theology and will be useful for formators and candidates for the priesthood

Fr Thomas KOCHUTHARA
Oriens Theological College
Shillong 793003

Region & Religion. Land, Territory and Nation from a Theological Perspective Edited by Viggo MORTENSEN Geneva Dpt of Theology and Studies, Lutheran World Federation, 1995 Pp 190 $ 10

In their efforts to develop local theologies, specially indigenous (tribal and dalit) theologies, our students often come to the issue of land and its relation to peoples and to religion There is not a great abundance of written material on these issues at the theological level to help them deepen their reflections This study from the Lutheran tradition offers much material which was collected at an international consultation in Imigrante, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, in 1993 Naturally the focus of the studies is often Brazil The case studies include also a paper on South African Land Reform and the problem of the Saami of North Scandinavia and the Kola Peninsula The two case studies on Brazil deal with the Indigenous peoples and with the small farmers Many principles and conclusions would apply also to the Indian situation

Besides the case studies, the book includes six biblical-theological essays on the land, on ethnicity and universalism, on the biblical God of History somewhat set in opposition to the Gods of Space who are said today to show their power over souls and nations (Tillich, quoted on p 79) It is here that the relation of region and religion is expressly treated

Two main themes emerge as prominent in the consultation. One is the urgent need of agrarian reform in many countries and the Church's response to this need "We are to sustain, encourage and work with those groups which promote land reform We are to advocate governmental structures which protect the rights of indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, and marginalized groups in society, sustain the environment, and promote a decent standard of living and participation" (171) The other theme is the relation of territory and nation, specially in reference to indigenous peoples, and the concept of nation as distinct from state or country The identification of country with country nation to the modern temptation of ethnic cleansing and other problems for indigenous peoples Here a good amount of political philosophy is needed The pluralistic nature of all countries in the world and the legal rights of each "nation" within every country to secure its survival as nation must be affirmed

If land is often cited as the root cause of the killings not only in Rwanda but in many places including Asia, *New York Times*, 14 Aug 1994, Christian theology needs to throw light on the relation of land, people and religion As we rightly reject today the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*, we must also affirm that all life is life-in-neighbourhood (170), and "support the indigenous peoples in their struggle to recover their historical memory and accompany them with the gospel that liberates and sets free" (5)

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Index of Volume LVIII (1994)

EDITORIALS

DOCUMENTS

ANALYTICAL INDEX

(Cross references are introduced by an asterisk B refers to subsequent entries in the Bibliography)

BOOK REVIEWS

Key to Reviewers: AC=Anil Couto, DB=David Baker; DP=Desiderio Pinto; EJD=Ed. J Daly, FP=Francis Perumalil, GGS=G Gispert-Sauch, GK=George Keerankeri; JB=Joe Britto, JFD=Jerome F Durack, JS=John Sahadat, KA=K. Augustine, LF=Leonard Fernando, MJ=Mohan Joseph, MVA=M.V Amalanathan; PAJ=P.A. Joseph; PJJ=P J Joseph, PM=Poulose Mangai, PMM=Paddy M Meagher; RDS=Richard DeSmet, RHL=Roger L. Lesser; RL=Roman Lewicki; SA=S. Arokiasamy; SMK=S.M John Keneedy, TA=Thomas Amirtham; TK= Thomas Kochuthara; VMJ= V.M. Jose

AUTHORS

(Bracketed numbers indicate Correspondence Section. Book reviewers listed in previous section)

CONTENTS OF VOLUME LVII

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

Remembering the Day when

The **WISDOM** of God became the **LIGHT** of the world,

The Editorial Board and the Management of the

VIDYAJYOTI JOURNAL

OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

wish all its

Readers, Contributors and Advertisers

a very ***Joyful Christmas***

and ***God's choicest Blessings***

for the year 1995

Delhi Postal Regd. No. DL-11140/94 R.N.I.Reg. No. 45761/86

The Vidyajyoti Journal is a platform for theological thinking and creative reflection for India and South Asia.

It intends to establish links of dialogue between the cultures of Asia and the traditions of Christianity; between the religions of the world among themselves; between religion and modern culture; between theology and human sciences.

Read Vidyajyoti regularly and feel the pulse of the South Asian Church. Offer a subscription of the Journal as a Christmas gift to your friend — Priest, Sister or Lay Leader. They will be grateful to you twelve times a year.

Vidyajyoti is the best means for ongoing formation.

ISSN 0970—1079